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Season's Greetings



TO

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BIG JOHN STRONG'S TRAINED ANIMAL CIRCUS



Greetings and Best Wishes
for a
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



1926-1929

By Joseph T. Bradbury

Foreword

History has recorded that the first, large, successful, totally motorized, circus in the United States was Downie Bros. which initially went on the road in 1926. The key words are large and successful. An attempt at a fully motorized circus was made in 1918 when the fairly large Coop and Lent Circus tried it but failed. A most ambitious attempt to transport a circus entirely by trucks was later made in 1919 when Frank Spellman launched his United States Motorized Circus. It was out only a few days. In 1921 the B.L. Wallace Circus was one hundred percent motorized but it lasted only three months.

Showmen didn't give up on trucks entirely after these early failures and all through the early 1920's many overland (mud) circus operators added trucks to help transport their shows. By 1925 practically all of the larger mud shows such as Mighty Haag were using trucks to augment their regular wagons hauled by horses. In fact during the mid 1920's there were very few overland shows still moving by equine power alone. It is possible that several small outfits were using trucks exclusively, however there were no medium or large shows doing so.

Andrew Downie, who had put in a long career in circus business, and retired after selling his Walter L. Main Railroad Circus at conclusion of the 1924 season, couldn't stand being away from the big tops and decided to get back into the game after a single season of idleness. Two factors led to his decision to frame a completely motorized circus on the size and scale of his former railroad shows (10 to 20 cars). First he often remarked to associates and was even quoted in the trade publications that he was "fed up" with a railroad show, disgusted with the high rates charged, service often rendered, and difficulties in routing a medium size show into the towns he wanted to play. Secondly, he felt the time was ripe for a totally motorized show to click. Roads had been dramatically improved in recent years, motor trucks were heavier, more powerful, and more reliable. Tires were better, gasoline and maintenance reasonably priced, and everything consider-

Downie Bros. on the lot, season of 1927. This photo is believed to have been taken shortly after the new big top was put into use in mid-season. Tent size was a 90 ft. round with three 40 ft. middles. Circus World Museum Collection.

ed he felt he could make a motorized show go. He was right. From the beginning his new Downie Bros. Circus was a success. The show Downie framed in 1926 remained on the road for 14 consecutive seasons under four different owners. Throughout its history it was considered the nation's largest motorized circus, enjoyed a fine reputation, and remains fondly in the memory of both showmen and fans to this date. This is the story of the Downie Bros. Circus.

Because of Chang Reynolds' excellent article entitled "Downie Bros. Wild Animal Circus 1926" which appeared in the Jan-Feb 1963 Bandwagon and covered in detail a full biographical sketch of Andrew Downie, the framing of the show, and events of the initial season, it has been decided that in this article only a brief summary of the 1926 season will be given. Since the above issue is out of print serious thought was given to having it reprinted, however it was felt that those readers who have joined CHS or subscribed since then can obtain a copy on microfilm or possibly the original through a circusana dealer. (The author has about a half dozen copies he might part with to the serious minded). A few of the better photos appearing in the original article will be reprinted here.

This Downie history will take a total of six installments which will run consecutively and be concluded with the Sept-Oct 1976 issue. Since this show is the all time favorite motorized show of many CHS members (the author included) it is planned to illustrate it very profusely. Of special interest will be the large number of lithographs, many of them provided by the Circus World Museum at no expense to Bandwagon to be used. Generally it will be the policy so far as practical to use only illustrations with a particular installment that are dated within the period covered, however at times this will not be possible due to the overabundance of photos for some seasons and scarcity of others. Since most of the lithographs are dated in the mid 30's they will be scattered throughout the entire article for space consideration. As is true in most instances "new" photos will turn up while the series is in progress. These will either be fitted into future installments or put into special photo supplements. It is the intention of the author and editor to give Downie Bros. first class coverage.

The 1926 Season

(Summary) Andrew Downie McPhee was born in Stephens Township, near Exter, Ontario, Canada, August 13, 1963. He dropped the McPhee when he entered the





Downie Bros. advertising truck No. 2, season of 1926. Pfening Collection.

circus world and became known to his contemporaries and hence to history as Andrew Downie. In later years, following his brief retirement, he established a home in Medina, N.Y. and was there at time of his death at age 67, Dec. 17, 1930.

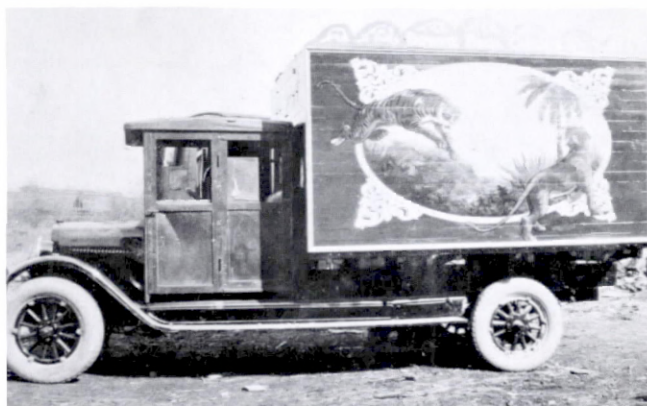
Chang Reynolds in his article outlines Downie's circus career prior to the Downie Bros. Circus of 1926 as follows.

"When Andrew Downie came out of retirement in the winter of 1925-26 to launch his new circus, he was a veteran of over 40 years in show business. He had joined with Clarence Austin in 1884 in a one-ring venture entitled 'The Downie & Austin Parlor Circus' after several years as an acrobat, wire walker and juggler. At that time he was just over 20 years old. For several years he piloted such organizations as the Rich & Downie Circus, Andrew Downie's Dog and Pony Circus, Downie & Gallagher, and Downie & Wheeler. Other show activities during the years before 1914 included the ownership of the Dia-

mond Minstrels, a circus tour by barge of gowns on the Erie Canal in 1892, a tour of Canada from Winnipeg to the Pacific Coast with his repertoire company, and executive posts on the Great Wallace Circus.

"Although Downie married Christena Hewer (M'lle La Tena) in 1890, he did not operate the circus by that name until 1914 when he opened with a 10 car railroad show entitled, 'The La Tena Wild Animal Circus'. In 1916 this show was increased to fifteen cars and Downie returned to his Canadian homeland for part of the season's route. This show folded without warning in 1917 at Havre de Grace, Maryland, but Downie leased the Walter L. Main title the following winter and was on the road with it until the end of the 1924 season when he retired. Miller Bros. took possession on Oct. 25 after the final stand of the season. Col. Joe Miller had been with the show since the sale was consummated in September. Downie

Downie Bros. Circus personnel, season of 1927. Andrew Downie is seated in front row center with straw hat in hand. Photo by E. J. Kelty (Century)



Downie Bros. tableau truck with jungle scene painting on the side, season of 1926. Pfening Collection.

had passed his 61st birthday in August of that year and undoubtedly felt that a rest from the strenuous life was in order. However, he was away from the circus one season only before developing the motorized circus that was to become one of the favorite shows of the eastern states, under the management of Downie, and after his death, Charles Sparks."

The Downie Bros. Circus was organized at Havre de Grace, Maryland hurriedly in the spring of 1926. This was the same city that Downie had earlier quartered his Walter L. Main Railroad show in. At the beginning of the season which opened in Havre de Grace, April 24, 1926, the show was transported on 38 trucks, 5 trailers, 3 tractors, and 3 advance trucks. Baggage trucks were painted red with gold and silver trim. Frank Phillips who furnished much of the information for Chang Reynolds article said that the rolling stock was collected from many sources. Some vehicles were well worn





when Downie got them, others were brand new such as the beautiful truck used to carry an air calliope built by Joe Ori of the Pneumatic Calliope Co., Newark, N.J.

Key personnel with the initial Downie Bros. show included James Heron, asst. manager; Jerome T. Harriman, general agent; William B. Emerson, treasurer; Archie Silverlake, equestrian director; Jake Friedman, sideshow manager; Joseph Gilligan, supt. of trucks. The big top was a new 80 with three 30's and performance presented in one ring, one platform, and steel arena. Some of the acts in the program included lions worked by Capt. Frank Phillips, Teddy, the elephant, worked by N.W. McKay, aerialists, Grants, Goodwins, and Faust; Terps educated dogs, military ponies, and high school horse, hand balancing and balancing perch by the Franklin brothers; The Rogos, jugglers; contortion by the Grants and iron jaw and single trapeze numbers. A street parade was a daily feature.

The 1926 route took the show through territory Andrew Downie had long played with his earlier shows. Downie Bros. was out 28 weeks, played in 8 states, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, West Virginia, and North

Andrew Downie (in straw hat) with two unidentified performers in front of a "living quarters" van truck on Downie Bros. lot, season of 1927. Photo by E. J. Kelty (Century).



Sideshow bannerline and midway crowd, Downie Bros. Circus, season of 1927. Billy Dick Collection.

Carolina. This season ended Nov. 6 at King's Mountain, N. C. and the show returned to quarters in Havre de Grace. Initially the show was billed as Downie Bros. Motorized Show and later in the season was advertised as Downie Bros. Wild West Circus, Downie Bros. World's Best Shows, and Downie Bros. Wild Animal Circus.

Information from the late Isaac Marcks files give some insight on how the show moved in 1926. Section One consisting of the cookhouse trucks left the lot at 6:30 p.m. and arrived at dark (average jump in summer); Section Two, baggage trucks, left at midnight, arrived on next stand's lot and waited for daylight; Third Section, house cars, horse and elephant trucks, left for next stand at 6:30 a.m. This of course was only a general schedule. Many factors could alter it.

The 1927 Season

The title of the show which appeared on the front cover of the very fine route book published at conclusion of the 1927 season was, "Downie Bros. Big 3 Ring Wild Animal Circus" and although different versions of the title may have been used in advertising at times this evidently was the official title of the show and for purposes

of this article covering the show's second season it will be considered as such.

Very little information has been gathered on the physical setup of the quarters at Havre de Grace. Frank Phillips says the show was framed at the ballpark in the spring of 1926 and presumably the same locale was used to winter the show following the conclusion of the season. Possibly it was the same site Downie has previously used to winter his railroad show. In any event it appears the quarters were adequate for storage of the rolling stock and numerous properties, housing of the animals and personnel, and provided areas for training and rehearsals of acts.

During the years the show wintered in Havre de Grace the quarter's shops turned out many custom built truck bodies which were mounted on chassis obtained from automotive manufacturers. Emphasis was given during the winter of 1926-27 to improving the hodge-podge collection of vehicles acquired the previous spring. Frank Phillips says that Downie purchased a number of new Chevrolet trucks and chassis during the winter and consequently the motor equipment in 1927 was vastly superior to that of the initial season.

The Billboard was generous with news from the Downie quarters all thru the winter and early spring of 1927. The Jan 1, 1927 issue started it off by stating that one of the best known old time Eastern agents, J.W. Swafford has been engaged to pilot the Downie Bros. Circus for 1927 and that George E. Caron would manage the advance trucks. There will be four vehicles ahead with fifteen men. Three billposting trucks will be used, which are now in the quarters' shops for the final touches of gold leaf and wild animal pictures. In addition to the three trucks the general agent will travel in a machine about six weeks ahead of the show. It is Mr. Downie's intention to have all special paper this season, using no stock printings at all. Other notes said that Hy Nichols has finished work on the calliope, that 8 Arkansas razorback hogs have arrived in quarters and are being broken by Bob Johnson, and W. H. Stokes has a mixed

Air calliope on Downie Bros. lot, about 1927. Two men at right are unidentified. Pfening Collection.





James Heron, Downie Bros. manager, and new Chevrolet auto in front of big top marquee, season of 1927. Pfening Collection.

animal group now being broken which includes a lion, leopard, goat, lamb, and collie dog. Stokes also is working an act using three elephants.

A later report said that five Eskimo dogs were received during the week to be broken into an act by G. E. Wilson. Stokes' mixed group was coming along fine and he was also working a bear act.

The Jan. 22, 1927 Billboard reported that Harry Leffler was assistant to Hy Nichols, the painter and decorator at quarters, also that G. E. Wilson was breaking the world's smallest pig act, little wild hogs 8 weeks old, using miniature props. It was felt that wild hogs would be quite a curiosity in the east but there was considerable red tape in having them shipped out of Florida. "Blink", the riding baboon, who had its arm broken a few weeks ago was reported to be working again. In this issue there was a photo of the Downie Bros. air calliope, newly painted for 1927, and the decorative scheme appears to be the same as that used in pictures of the vehicle taken a year or so later.

The Jan. 29, 1927 Billboard said that Andrew Downie has returned to quarters after an extensive trip on which he purchased several lions. James Heron, in charge of the quarters, as well as road manager for the circus was on a two weeks vacation at his home in Worcester, Mass. Visitors at quarters included Al F. Wheeler who was Downie's partner in operation of the Downie & Wheeler Railroad Circus 1911-13, and Harry Hunt, of Hunt's Three Ring Motorized Circus currently wintering at Pikesville, Maryland. The report also stated that Pete Hiner would soon start building new truck bodies to haul the seats, six new

cages, and a body for the three electric light plants. Additional lengths of blues and reserve seats will be carried in 1927. A six pony drill and another January mule will soon arrive from the south, a colored band and minstrel outfit will be features of the sideshow, new double deck banners have been ordered as well as a new horse tent, dressing room, and large marquee. Plans were also being made to add an extra

Reproduction from a page of the Downie Bros. 1928 courier. The vehicles have 1927 license plates indicating they were used on the show that season. From top to bottom are pictured No. 55, clown band truck; big show band truck; No. 17, sideshow band truck, and Scotch Kiltie band truck. Note that each vehicle had colorful paintings on the sides. Pfening collection.

middle piece in the big top which gives more seating capacity.

Andrew Downie, who as time progressed would spend less time in quarters or with the show on the road, had named James (Jimmy) Heron as manager who would look after the day by day activities. Heron formerly had been with the old American Vaudeville Circuit as an agent and later had managed vaudeville theaters. He left this life for the circus and was with Downie when the latter operated the Walter L. Main Circus from 1918-24. Heron was one of the first hired by Downie when he decided to frame Downie Bros. in the early spring of 1926. He was a knowledgeable circus man, experienced by his several years with Downie, and proved to be a very capable circus executive, who in later years had his own show.

Downie Bros. Wild Animal Circus

DOWNIE BROS. MOTORIZED CIRCUS PRESENTS CLEAN PROGRAM

The throngs that crowded the tents of Downie Bros. Circus were not disappointed in the program presented by this up-to-date organization. The trained animals were at their best. The dogs did their tricks perfectly, the ponies went through their part in their usual style, the trained razor back hogs gave a demonstration of what a pig can do when properly taught and the other animals including the fierce lions and leopards were not a bit disappointing. The elephants gave a fine showing of their strength and the aerialists operating in three rings simultaneously kept the necks of the spectators moving to take in everything. The clowns were funny and furnished lots of amusement for all. It would be hard to get together a better organization of animals and people for such a circus as the company furnishes.—Port Jervis, N. Y. Union-Gazette.



Reports in mid-February said that an additional training ring had been set up in quarters since so many animal acts were being broken. Personnel newly signed for the season included Judd S. Muckle in charge of the cookhouse, Jack Coddins and wife for the wildest aftershow, and William Allison, bandleader.

The Feb. 19, 1927 Billboard reported that Milt Robbins would manage the Downie sideshow and Mrs. Robbins would do a musical and second side act in the enlarged sideshow. Robbins formerly had been on Fred Buchanan's Robbins Bros. Billy Dick and Peggy Waddell, female impersonators, were signed for 1927, Billy to be in the sideshow and Peggy to work the big show come in. Other notes said that John B. Duffey, animal picture artist was at work on the new cages and tableaux, the new canvas ordered from Driver Bros. had arrived, Gene and Mary Enos who would be on the show doing high perch and rolling globe acts had a new living car (as house trailers were often called at the time). Taylor and Moore, aerial artists, were signed, as well as Smilie Daly, clown cop. Final reports said that Jimmy Heron had returned from a visit to the hard coal regions of Pennsylvania on a prospecting trip of territory the show planned to play, and that Jack Welch, R. A. Young, and Pete Hiner were still hard at work on the bodies of the new seat trucks.

Things were still moving fast and furious when the Feb. 26, 1927 Billboard noted

Downie Bros. personnel, Bay Shore, N.Y., May 28, 1928. Seventh from the right second row, is Manager James Heron and Owner Andrew Downie is immediately on his left. Photo by E.J. Kelty (Century).

that Carl Clark, who formerly had his own wagon show in New York State, was on hand breaking pony drills and domestic animal acts. John B. Duffey, decorator, had finished the fourth advance truck, the Rojas Duo, aerial artists and comedy jugglers, had been signed, Jerry Martin, colored band leader would have charge of the sideshow minstrels, and work was proceeding on schedule on the new cages and truck for the electric light plants.

The Downie lion act was the feature of the Lion's Club Charity Ball in Jersey City, N. J. on February 23. The lions were transported there by truck and the act was worked by Capt. Bob Johnson. In early March Carl Clark who worked the dog and pig act claimed he had the only hog in the world that walks on hind legs. Notes from Havre de Grace said further that G. E. Wilson had his house truck about finished and that his young son, "Dime" (currently well known to circus people and fans)

Andrew Downie (with hat) and unidentified man on Downie Bros. lot at Dansville, N. Y., August 1928. Note pit show bannerline at right advertising Georgette (half and half) and other attractions. Pfening collection.



was breaking a novelty clown number with his pet dog. Several more ponies were received from South Carolina.

All through March news items continued from quarters. The John Walters trio signed to do several acts, Blackie Dutton was to handle props, the show got 12 monkeys, and according to Charles Williams a carload of truck chassis were received upon which the recently constructed bodies would be mounted.

The April 9, 1927 Billboard said that Downie had purchased a Caterpillar tractor to move trucks on and off the lot, and the fleet movements on the highway, and raise center poles and canvas of the big top. An extra truck had been added to haul it. Downie and Heron went to Oxford, Pa. to see Mr. Hitchnew of The News, who contracted to mail the rotogravure newspaper to RFD box holders this season. While there they called on Al F. Wheeler. An advertisement also appeared in this issue stating the show wanted a boss property man and wood worker, a man to handle the animal pit show and drive a truck, two billposters, one bannerman, and a lithographer, also novelty acts for the big show, wild west people for the concert, and workmen for all departments.

The April 16, 1927 Billboard had the official Downie, "call" advising all people engaged for the season to report to Havre de Grace, Tues. April 19 for rehearsals, and informing the season would open in that city on April 23. General information notes said that the No. 1 band truck had been finished and had plenty of gold leaf on it, and that Jack Welch would soon have the fifth and final tableau and band truck out of the carpenters shop. The five seat trucks had been completed, J. W. Swafford, general agent, had been out contracting towns for several weeks, and Joseph Hughes, formerly with Downie's railroad show would have the lunch concessions, balloons, whips, and novelties for the coming season.

Downie now had his staff and department heads lined up and the 1927 roster read as follows: Downie Bros. Inc., owner; Andrew Downie, president; James Heron, manager; J. W. Swafford, general agent; Harry Frazier, L. H. Rosenheim, special agents; Milt Robbins, sideshow manager; Joseph Gilligan, general supt; B. G. (Peck) Amsden, supt. privileges and legal adjuster; William Allison, musical director; Harry Allen, supt. res. seats and announcer; Steve Roberts, supt. canvas; Carl Johnson, supt. trucks; Edward Murphy, supt. ring stock; Judd S. Muckle, supt. concession dept; Blackie Dutton, supt. props; C. P. Schyer, 24 hr agent; Sam Logan, supt. elephants; R. A. Young, boss carpenter; Bob Johnson, supt. animals; Pete Hiner, blacksmith; George E. Caron, Mgr. adv. cars; Mrs. Marie Heron, manager candy stands; Gene Enos, equestrian director.

The show claimed to be transported on 60 trucks. The reader will note from time to time throughout the course of this series that various "counts" of trucks will be given. These will vary, oftentimes as many as 10 to 20 vehicles within a single season.

The reason is that it all depends on what vehicles are being counted. Some include everything that rolls, privately owned autos and trailers as well as show owned trucks. Some counts include only the vehicles on the lot, not those in advance. When Downie Bros. reached it's peak in total number of vehicles in the late 20's the number of 75 was usually given. This figure included everything, show owned trucks and privately owned vehicles. There were actually about 50 show owned vehicles including the advance while the rest belonged to various staffers and performers. In late 1930 when the show began converting from straight bed trucks to semi's then the overall count began to drop as one large tractor with semi trailer could carry the load of two or more regular straight beds. Unfortunately we have not turned up any rosters of motor equipment during the first few years of the show's existence so we must rely on these various "counts".

In 1927 Downie Bros. carried three elephants, Teddy, Tena, and Babe. Chang Reynolds, well known circus and elephant historian, has kindly furnished a complete rundown on all of the elephants which served under the Downie banner. Chang tells about the trio in 1927 as follows.

"TEDDY, obtained by Downie in the spring of 1926 from Toy Town, Hippodrome New York City, where he was on exhibit with Rosa's Midgets. He was an Asiatic male with tusks. In 1935 on the Downie show he weighed 5065 lbs, was 7 ft. 8 in. tall and was estimated 22 years old (according to Benedick, who made the survey). I think this age is too much as I have a photo of Teddy taken with Frank Phillips and he is bound to be younger. Teddy was trained to do a head-carry by Frank Phillips in 1930.

"TENA, Asiatic female, obtained by Downie Bros. in mid-season 1926.

"BABE, Asiatic female, arrived on the Downie show either in late 1926 season or during the winter of 1926-27 according to my research in Billboard and conversations with Frank Phillips. He showed me a photo that depicted two small females and Teddy which he said was taken in 1927."

The Billboard mentioned that a four year old elephant was due to arrive in Downie quarters on April 4, 1927 and in all probability, if the report was correct, this was Babe. It has been noted that for the next year or so there were frequent Billboard reports of additional elephants being purchased by Andrew Downie. Possibly some of these were correct but if so Downie disposed of them elsewhere as they didn't join the show. From the best evidence it seems that Teddy, Tena, and Babe comprised the entire Downie Bros. herd of elephants until the summer of 1930 when two more were added, that account to be related later. During the first years of the Downie show there was a steady flow of elephant men coming and going, some relatively unknown, and some with best known names in the business.

The 1927 season opened at Havre de Grace, Md., Sat. April 23. First road stand

was at Elkton, Md., April 25, then the show entered Pennsylvania the following day at Marcus Hook with stands at Darby, Conestock, West Chester, and Phenixville completing the first full week. Downie went into New York at Lambersville, May 15, then immediately moved to New Jersey to play Somerville, followed by High Bridge. It was at Hackettstown, N. J. on May 14 when The Billboard sent a reporter to visit the show and give the circus world it's first official account of the 1927 Downie Bros. Show. The rather full review appeared in the May 21, 1927 Billboard and read as follows. (condensed)

"DOWNIE SHOW BETTER THAN LAST SEASON. Hackettstown, N. J., May 14, 1927. Downie Bros. Circus, owned by Andrew Downie is now in its second season. It is decidedly bigger and better than last season. It was reviewed under the same conditions as in 1926, namely rain and mud. Afternoon crowd light but a good sized crowd at night. Program consisted of 27 numbers in three rings, under the guidance of Gene Enos, equestrian director.

Tournament, followed by single trapeze number involving Jane Walters, Miss Rojas, and Miss Wilson. John Lancaster sang a clown number. Followed by dog acts of Mr. Clark, Mr. Levine, and Mr. Wilson in three rings. Next grotesque clown number, which introduced Grant the contortionist and George Levine the hand balancer. Followed by elephant acts of the Logans, Sam and Bessie, in rings one and three. Mary Enos in her revolving glove act held center ring. Double trapeze numbers followed introducing the Cowdens, Taylor and Moore, and the Walters Duo. Next, mixed group of animals in center ring presented by Capt. Frank Phillips. More clown acts. Followed were goat acts of Wilson, Clark, and Levine. Swinging ladder number next consisted of Misses Wilson, Cowden, Walters, Hiser, and Griebing. Capt. Phillips next had the big lion act in the center ring. Taylor and Moore, the Grants, and Walters occupied

Downie Bros. on lot, probably 1928 season. Note midway lunch car at left, big top in back, and sideshow at right. Bannerline had not been erected when photo taken. Pfening collection.



three rings in their cradle aerial evolutions. Bessie Hiser center ring with her performing elephant, canine and pony, while Prof. Clark occupied ring three with 10 ponies. Iron jaw number by Misses Wilson, Rojas and Moore. Then came Clarke and Wilsons riding dogs and monkeys in rings 2 and 3. Gene and Mary Enos in their high carrying perch act. The revolving ladders were worked by the Rojas and Aerial Cowdens. Clown contingent consisted of John Lancaster, Otto Griebing, Shorty Kell, Peggy Waddell, Dime Wilson, Tom Griswold, Bert Smith, Sam Ward, and Frank Mills. Griebing and Lancaster are the producing clowns.

"After show concert: Freddy Alberg middle weight boxer and wrestler of the South. Jack Cowden and wife whip crackers, rope spinners, and sharp shooters. Prof. Clark talking pony, the Griebings in a comedy sketch and John Lancaster in monologue and songs.

"Big top, 5 poles, 90 ft. round, with four 30 ft. middles, 3 rings, and 1 arena. Milt Robbins has the sideshow consisting of John Matthews' colored band and minstrels. Maxine, sword swallower, Don Taylor, magician and ventriloquist, the Cowdens, impalement act; Billy Dick's reptiles, Capt. Al Marsh fire eater, Miss Agnew's Hawaiian Opera, Cameron's Kilties Band, Don Taylor inside lecturer, Dixie Adams boss canvasman with 8 assistants. Jack Kelly and Bow Agnew on the ticket boxes. Side show front has 8 banners (this canvas crew was the sideshow canvas crew).

"Pit Show. Managed by James Heron with Jim Kelly in charge, contains Snakene, Bo Bo, freak animal; Tiny Mite, small horse, baboons and alligators.

"180 people on payroll, 38 trucks are in the parade containing special made panel bodies and 10 open dens, 4 elephants (believed to be misprint), 4 miniature cages pulled by trucks, 5 bands, and one air calliope played by Joe Ori. There's a total of 74 trucks carried by the show, equal to a 15 car railroad show, these, and 1 and 2 ton trucks.

"Show is usually off the lot and down the way to the next stand by midnight. The living cars and trucks get underway in the morning. Some people stay at hotels, but others have their own living cars.



Downie Bros. big top on lot at Hornell, N.Y., June 26, 1929. The tent had been delivered new from Driver Brothers when the show was in Ohio a few weeks earlier. Photo by W. H. Pennoyer.

"Light plant is under Lewis Mungler. Bob Dickman manages cookhouse with 14 assistants. Howard Lonie is first cook with 3 assistants. Tex Montgomery is head waiter with 10 helpers. John Hughes and Sam Kitz have the lunch stand concession. Lester Patterson operates concessions.

"The show has had daily rain and opposition in the last two weeks but they are nonetheless making money."

The report that 38 trucks were in the parade seems to be quite high. It is true in the very early years of motorized shows the management tried to put as many vehicles as practical in the daily march but still this number is too many. In all probability there were about 20 motor units in the parade.

If the report of the 5 pole big top is correct then it appears that this was the only time Downie Bros. had more than a 4 pole top. The big top received later in the season had only 4 poles as per photo No. 1.

Downie Bros. returned to New York May 11 at Warwick and remained in the state until the 23rd when it went into Pennsylvania for a single date at Susquehanna, May 23, then it was back into New York for 8 more stands.

Heavy rains plague the show during the first weeks of the season. The route book says the show encountered 34 days of rain after the opening, in fact it was pointed out that Downie Bros. didn't see the sun shine from Harve de Grace until it reached Middleburg, N.Y. May 28 but "despite the wet and rainy spring the Downie show was on the right side of the ledger throughout and the 1927 season as a whole made history financially in the regime of Andrew Downie."

The June 11, 1927 Billboard said that Downie was moving despite the heavy rains all thru the Catskill mountains. It was noted that the show had not lost a performance or parade. Steve Roberts had the big top up by 8 a.m. every morning. Charles Williams, chief mechanic, had a new "trouble car" which travels the entire length of the fleet several times during a run. Other notes said that Andrew Downie had left the show in Hancock and returned to his home in Medina, a new electric light plant had been received, and the

Aerial Levines were now doing their double trapeze turn. The article concluded that Downie despite rain had two good crowds at Susquehanna, Pa. but due to wet roads a truck left the highway and went down a 30 ft. embankment on Tuscotosa Hill. The truck was damaged and the driver injured.

On June 2 the show played Ft. Plain, N.Y. on a free lot owned by prominent circus fan, George Duffy, who entertained the staff at dinner between performances that day and did everything possible to make the stand a success. The show was at Johnstown, N. Y. June 6 and was the first circus there in ten years. Business was good. Andrew Downie, who had returned to the show from his home, purchased a new living quarters van at Dolgeville, N.Y. on June 4.

The show made it's first visit to Vermont at Manchester on June 10 which was followed by dates at Ludlow and Springfield before moving on to New Hampshire, June 14, at Clairmont. However, the show returned to Vermont the very next day at White River Junction and remained for 12 stands.

CHS Wes Herwig of Randolph Center, Vt. recently sent us the following interesting items concerning Downie's first visit to his state.

"The second year of the Downie Bros. Circus existence it came into Vermont and June 15 played White River Jct, June 16, Randolph, and June 17, Rochester, 1927. On it's way to Randolph the show passed through Bethel and the following item which appeared in the Bethel Courier the next week gives some idea of the problems the show had in moving through this rugged Green Mountain country. 'The Downie Circus passed through Bethel last week enroute to Randolph and many of the curbites saw their full of the difficulties of moving a circus by trucks. Many of the trucks were Chevrolets and Fords which seemed to be too light for the heavy loads. Some of the trucks broke down and had to be towed in, and many more were unable to make the Church Street hill and the Old Church hill. On these hills the circus tractor which the manager says is indispensable to the circus, hauled many of the trucks up the hill. Many Bethelites went to Randolph for the circus and parade. The absence of large and nicely groomed horses in the motor drawn parade was regretted.'

"Downie Bros. was the first motorized circus to play Randolph, a town which was used to Sparks, Walter L. Main, Gentry



Downie Bros. truck and cage trailer on lot at Taunton, Mass., August 22, 1929. Photo by John Cutler.

Bros. etc. and the idea of a motorized parade didn't go over too good as noted in this after-notice in the Randolph Herald and News of June 23, 1927. 'Downie's Circus which showed here Thursday received a large patronage at the afternoon exhibition, when the tent was filled, and a fair sized audience was present in the evening. The street parade failed to make a good impression. The old circus legend of lines of striding animals and horse drawn cages of wild beasts and gaudily painted carriages has not quite given way to the modern motorcade. But the tent show was good, especially the performing animals, which gave some of the best acts ever seen here. The circus people were well behaved and came and went without any disorder or disturbance.'

At Ludlow, Vt. "Spit Fire" one of the show's lionesses gave birth to four cubs but only two of them survived. Also at Ludlow the route book notes that a great many of the show's personnel took advantage of the occasion and drove to Plymouth, the little town in the green hills which gave us our president. (Calvin Cooledge).

On June 29 the show moved into New Hampshire to play Colebrook, Lancaster, returned to Vermont for St. Johnsbury, and then went back into New Hampshire at Lisbon on July 2. Downie remained in the state thru North Conway, July 7, then moved into Maine at Bridgeton.

The route book records that at Skowhegan, Maine, July 18, the first really bad accident of the season occurred. The account was as follows.

"The cookhouse department which leaves immediately after serving supper for the next stand was enroute from Bingham, Maine to Skowhegan. The front left tire blew out and the driver could not hold the truck in the road. It went into a ditch, pinning the driver under the steering wheel. He was pinned there for twenty minutes while the rest of the boys went a quarter of a mile to get an axe to chop him out. His right ankle was broken and his left leg twisted. A colored waiter who had been riding on the front seat got his leg caught in the door and it was broken at the knee. They were both taken to the Skowhegan hospital and both rejoined the show after several weeks."

It was back into New Hampshire at

Farmington on July 27 and after a total of five stands the show entered Massachusetts at Winchendon, August 3. Only three dates were played in the Bay State, then it was into Connecticut on August 6 at Stafford Springs. Four additional stands were played in the state before making Nyack, N.Y., August 12, then moving on to New Jersey at Englewood, Downie remained in New Jersey until Sept. 1 and the route book says the show enjoyed a real business in the southern portion. The route book also contained this notation.

"At Rahway, N. J., August 15, the new big top was received from Driver Bros., Chicago and Walter Driver, president of the company, must be greatly complimented for the wonderful workmanship done on this spread of canvas. We all know what Walter says, Walter does, and our big top answers the question of the success of Walter Driver, Andrew Downie has used nothing in the way of canvas in the past ten years that did not bear the Driver brand."

The Sept. 3, 1927 Billboard broke a several week silence on Downie activities and said that E. F. Day, circus fan of Long Branch, N. J., saw the show at Point Pleasant, N. J., August 18, and wrote that it was the first show in that town in 15 years. It rained in the afternoon but there were two full houses. His report emphasized the clean, sharp appearance of everything about the show. Andrew Downie was quoted as saying the show has had big business all summer, in fact, even from the first day of the season.

The show played Smyrna, Del., Sept. 3, went into Maryland for dates at Centerville and Chestertown, then returned to Delaware at Middletown, Sept. 7, and remained in the state only long enough to play Newark the next day. Pennsylvania was next with first stand at Kennett Square, Sept. 9, followed by Oxford. The route book recalled that Oxford was the former winter home of the Downie and Wheeler Railroad Circus and that day a Mr. Oswald, life long friend of "Governor" Downie was on hand early in the morning and stayed on the lot until the big top was rolled up at night. An interesting notation in the route book was as follows.

"On August 16 the show played McConnellsburg, Pa., the little city lays in between the Alleghenies of Pennsylvania, and had a real days business. The show in order to make McConnellsburg has to cross one of the largest mountains in the state of Pennsylvania going into town and leaving. Not one mishap occurred."

Following a single stand in Maryland at Williamsport, Sept. 20, the show then played Charlestown, W. Va., after which it returned to Maryland for Brunswick and Fredrick. Moving south the show entered Virginia at Leesburg, Sept. 24, which was followed by Warrenton, Front Royal, Culpepper, Orange, and Palmyra, where a matinee performance only was scheduled due to a 65 mile run the next day to Farmville.

The show was scheduled to play South Hill, Va. October 5 but after they got the tents in the air the local authorities ad-

vised there was a law prohibiting a show playing within one week of the local fair unless a fee of \$1,000.00 a performance was paid. Faced with this prohibitive license the show tore down and moved on to Warrenton, N. C. booked for the next day. The fair that caused the show to cancel it's date at South Hill was being held at Chase, City, a distance of 25 miles away, but in the same county.

An extensive tour of North Carolina followed with a total of 33 stands played in the state. Not much news of the show's activities appeared in the Billboard during this time but the Oct. 22, 1927 issue did say that Downie planned to enlarge the show next season and would add more trucks and animal cages. Havre de Grace would again be the winterquarters site. A new dressing room tent was received from Driver Bros. and put into the air sometime before the season closed.

The Oct. 29, 1927 Billboard said that Clyde H. Williard had joined Downie as a special agent after he closed as advertising car manager of the 101 Ranch Wild West Show. The article said Andrew Downie was spending a few days in New York City. He frequently left the show during the season.

The 1927 season came to a close at Enfield, N. C., November 12, and immediately thereafter the show motored to Havre de Grace quarters.

The final notation in the route book said that in 1927 Downie Bros. visited 12 states running exclusively on Firestone tires and the last run from the closing stand to quarters was 300 miles.

It had been a profitable season for Downie. It's future was now definitely established and favorable publicity was gen-

This fine art work picturing the street parade was submitted by Erie in the period 1928-30, however a check of the Downie Bros. couriers and heralds of the period fail to show this particular illustration so possibly it was never used. Pfening Collection.

erated in all sections it played in. In an article in the Dec. 10, 1927 Billboard, "The Evolution of the Mud Show" by Fletcher Smith the author had this to say.

"Andrew Downie has had a most successful season. He uses 53 trucks and most of the performers and bosses have their own cars. If on rails the show would require 14 cars. He learned that it was impossible to use trailers and since he discarded them has had no trouble. It is his boast he has never lost a meal in the cookhouse. Unlike most truck shows he moves at night. As soon as supper is over, the cookhouse is loaded and starts for the next stand. They 'rail' the road just as was done in the old wagon show days. As fast as any truck is loaded and ready to move it starts for the next town. The performers stop at hotels or have their own cars, the show furnishing oil and gasoline. Most other shows wait till daylight before moving."

A few statements in this article should be clarified. Although some old time 'railing' of the roads may still have been done in some areas as late as 1927 the practice soon gave way to the use of directional arrows on power poles, trees, or other structures. Chalking of arrows remained the practice until sometime after World War II when the current practice of using detachable paper arrows came into use. The author indicates trucks left the lot after being loaded, however this doesn't imply each vehicle moved singularly as is the practice today. They usually moved by departments in mini convoys with 3 to 10 trucks in line. This continued to be the custom until the mid 30's when various state highway patrols prohibited this practice. In the very early days some Downie Bros. personnel would stay in hotels but this number became increasingly fewer and by the end of the second season practically all staffers and performers had their own mobile homes.

In December Andrew Downie took off on a three week vacation to Hot Springs, Ark. while as the Dec. 17, 1927 Billboard



recounts the show was comfortably housed in it's winter quarters in Havre de Grace where a new power woodworking machine has been ordered for the carpenter shop. Work had already started on repairing the older truck bodies and building new ones. Eugene Scott (Arkansas Slim) was in charge of the elephants assisted by Ed Copeland and Elmer Johnson and reports had it that it was planned to have three different elephant numbers in 1928. Two new goat acts and a new dog number were being broken and a new roof had been put on the winter quarters building.

The 1928 Season

As quarters work picked up after the first of the year Andrew Downie continued to travel about the country. After he and his wife returned from Hot Springs they went to their home in Medina for a short spell then on to New York City to see some Broadway shows. In late January he returned to quarters for a conference with Manager Heron.

Early signees for the 1928 season were Rodney and Ella Harris. It was first announced Rodney would be the new band-leader but Allison returned so Rodney played cornet in the band, while Ella was prima donna, worked elephants and was in other numbers. Charles Bowne arrived the first week in January to begin overhauling the light plant motors.

The Jan. 14, 1928 Billboard reported that the new garage machinery was now installed in the quarter's workshop, and all motors were being overhauled under direction of Milford Manning. It was mentioned that Sidney Rink, formerly with Al G. Barnes, was now at quarters working the elephants. No further mention was made of Arky Scott.

Information from the Downie quarters appeared nearly every week in the Billboard and reports said that Bob Weston had his goats working in fine shape, Frank Phillips had the new leopard broken and working in the regular act, Pete Hiner and Carl Johnson were doing the truck body work and coming along fine. Painting and decorating was under the direction of Vic Peralta assisted by Harry Leffler. In late January Charles Sparks and wife were visitors as the Downie quarters.

The show ran an advertisement in the Jan. 28, 1928 Billboard wanting for the season, "Novelty acts, clown for big show, man to work and break wild animal acts, sideshow ticket sellers, Scotch band, sword swallower, and musical act." Offered for sale was one Cletrac Caterpillar Type Tractor, a Dodge three quarter ton delivery truck, and six miniature cages hauled by ponies.

News came in February that Jerome Harriman had signed on as Downie general agent for the third year and that the advance would travel on 5 vehicles using 20 men. Special paper and a 24 page roto-gravure booklet and quarter sheet herald would be used during the coming season. Also it was announced that R. A. (Brigham) Young was in charge of the woodworking shop which currently was working on a new

light plant truck which would carry one plant, air compressor, and tire vulcanizer. It was said that the No. 1 light plant truck carries the big light plant only. New animals arriving in quarters included 6 ponies to be broken for a drill, and several cockattos to be broken into an act by Parker Anderson. Bill Emery came on in February to work the Downie elephant herd, making the third bull man with the show within the last few months.

Also in February it was announced that Leo "Tiger Bill" Snyder would be in charge of the wild west aftershow and would also be a parade feature.

An advertisement in the Feb. 18, 1928 Billboard wanted various big show and sideshow acts, advance, and cookhouse department personnel. The ad carried this notation, "Performers with their own machines and house cars given preferences.". The same issue said that Downie had purchased several lions and two bears from the Otis L. Smith Shows (carnival), also that Frank Phillips who had been on the show since it's beginning was leaving to go on the road doing ballyhoo for a motion picture company.

Around the first of March the elephant, "Tena", appeared at the Baltimore Advertising Club's party at the Emerson Hotel in that city. Jerome Harriman, who made the arrangements, also had several other animal acts and six miniature cages there.

In mid March the show announced the signing of the Morales Family of acrobats and that the trained cockatoo act would be a sideshow attraction. Andrew Downie returned to quarters in March after another stay in Hot Springs and immediately went into a conference with Manager Heron and General Agent Harriman on the coming season's route.

The Mar. 17, 1928 Billboard carried another ad wanting various performers, men

Tableau truck No. 40 with the big show band in Downie Bros. street parade at Taunton, Mass., August 22, 1929. This truck was used to carry the show's three elephants. Photo by John Cutler.



for the advance who can drive trucks, and a female impersonator to work the half and half for the pit show. For sale were 4 miniature cages four ponies and 2 large railroad show type animals dens, open on both sides.

The next week it was announced that the show had signed J.P. Nelson, sword swallower and Jack Huber, armless wonder for the sideshow. Other news said that the latest truck body to be turned out of the wood-working shop by Leo Snyder and his crew was the portable garage truck which carries a combination dynamo and generator, truck parts, mechanics' tools, air compressor, and tire vulcanizer. The sides drop down making work benches and the generator furnishes electricity for the drills and tire vulcanizer. Several new trucks had been added to the fleet including an additional sideshow vehicle, another truck to load seats, a No. 5 advertising truck, and one to help carry the big top canvas. Three cage trucks and several trailer cages were also constructed. The show claimed it would have a total of 10 cages in 1928. It was reported that Jerome Harriman had a new coupe and had been out several weeks contracting the route. James R. Gallagher, advertising banner solicitor, and already gotten several ads which would run all season. New elaborate elephant felt harness for use in parade and performance had also been obtained.

The Downie Bros. 1928 roster as published in the March 24, 1928 Billboard was as follows: Downie Bros. Inc. owner, Andrew Downie, president; James Heron, manager; Jerome T. Harriman, general agent; Frank Mahery, mgr. adv. trucks; George E. Caron, mgr. opposition brigade; Irish Horan, press agent back and supt. of reserved seats; Jack Sampson, mgr. sideshow; Gene Enos, equestrian director; Joe Gilligan, gen. supt; William Allison, musical director; Steve Roberts, supt. canvas; R. A. Young, supt. trucks, Milford Manning, master mechanic; Muldon Hartman, supt. commissary dept; Charles Bowen, supt. lights; James Conors, supt. of props; James R. Gallagher, 24 hr agent; William Emery, supt of elephants and menagerie; Gust Anderson, boss carpenter; Pete Hiner, blacksmith; Peck Amsden, legal



adjuster; Gene Enos, announcer. Show claimed total of 75 trucks.

By the end of March the final parade truck, the air calliope, had been thru the paint shop and now the baggage trucks were being painted. Opening date was almost here and the show was still advertising for performers and help in working departments. One advertisement said that Downie wanted a sober and experienced man to work the lion and leopard act, two more seat men, and help in all departments. Those who drive trucks will be paid extra.

The show opened the 1928 season at Havre de Grace, Md., Sat. April 21. The next stand was Annapolis, Md. April 23, followed by Alexandria, Va., where CFA president, Marshall L. King, visited. Many fans were on the lot that day and big business was reported. Additional Virginia stands came at Leesburg and Berryville.

The first scheduled date in West Virginia, Martinsburg, on April 27 was one to remember. Downie ran into a blizzard that day and more than a foot of snow covered the lot. Some poles were broken by the weight of the white stuff on the canvas. The evening performance had to be cancelled as well as the next day's stand at Berkley Springs. It was a most discomforting experience but the show finally got loaded up and with a Sunday run was able to move on to Hagerstown, Md. for performances on April 30. Downie moved into Pennsylvania May 1 at Waynesboro and after 8 stands in the Keystone State entered New Jersey at Somerville on May 10. After only 4 dates in the state the show went into New York at Nyack on May 15. While at Suffern the next day the Billboard sent a reporter to review the show which was published in the May 26, 1928 issue.

The article said that there were 30 performers in the program which was presented in 3 rings and steel arena. Gene Enos, equestrian director, never permits a lull in the program. Some 200 people are on the payroll and there are 76 trucks in the caravan. A total of 38 panel body trucks are used in the parade which are painted red and yellow with attractive ornamen-

Clown band truck No. 47 with cage trailer in Downie Bros. street parade at Taunton, Mass., August 22, 1929. Photo by John Cutler.

tations conceived by Victor Paralto. Five trucks are on the advance under direction of Jerome Harriman, general agent. George Caron has 3 billposters in his brigade and Frank Mehary used 4 trucks and 12 men. A large assortment of special paper, cards, and banners are used in the billing with a 24 page rotogravure booklet and attractive herald given wide distribution. The capacity of the big top, a 90 ft. round with three 40's is 2500 with 14 lengths of reserved seats, 12 tiers high, and 32 lengths of blues. Canvas is practically new made by Walter Driver and is in good condition. Equipment is the very best and in size is equal to a 20 car railroad show. Business has been especially good since the opening. To date there have been 3 turnaways. Suffern produced two good houses on the lot which was about one mile from town near the main highways.

The 1928 performance was as follows: Tournament, Riding dog and monkey, Parker Anderson; Two cages of lions, leopards, and mixed groups worked by Tom Atkinson; Riding dog and monkey, John White; Swinging perch number by Vern West and loop walk by Jim Goodwin; single elephant number worked by Miss Mary and Mrs. Atkinson; Trained leopards, Tom Atkinson; Clown contingent in balloon gag; Wire number in which Ella Harris and Vern West participate; The Morales Family in head slides including Felix, Petro, and Chonoca; Tom Atkinson with mixed group of wild animals; Clowns with their dead and alive number; Double trapeze featuring the Walters and Goodwins; Pony drill, Parker Anderson and John White; Mrs. Mary Enos in revolving globe act; Concert announcement: The Morales, Felix and Petro on trampoline; Clown band; Swinging ladders including Misses Goodwin, Griebbling, and Walters, Ella Harris, prima donna; Big elephant act in center ring including dogs worked by Ella Harris; Clown contingent

introducing leaps done by John Coleman; Trained goats and dogs, Mrs. Atkinson, Parker Anderson, and Mitzie; Concert announcement; Single trapeze, Miss Walters, Teresa Morales on the loop, and Ella Harris, single traps; Walkaround and prize fight by joeys on the track; John White's leaping hounds; Morales Family on the wire; Clown band; On the rings, Walter Coleman and Walters with juggling by the West Duo; Iron jaw, Miss Goodwin, Lois and Chonoca Morales, and Ella Harris; Animal act using 11 ponies, 2 bucking mules, and a number of dogs.

Otto Griebbling is producing clown with John Coleman, Harry Inman, Merlin Hinkle, William Walters, Jeff Murphy, and George Puckett in the alley. Prof. William C. Allison directs the 12 piece band using 60 cues during the performance.

The sideshow, under direction of Jack Sampson, has 10 double deck banners, door piece with bally platform, and 2 ticket boxes. Inside are 18 attractions, the elephants, and 4 double dens of wild animals. Sideshow attractions include Miss Sampson, mindreader and trained cockatoos; Mlle Ino, snake enchantress; Col. Baker, lecturer, impalement act, and magic; Edythe Troxell, sword box; J. P. Nelson, sword swallower; Maryland Minstrels (6 men and 2 women) presented by Jerry Martin. Misses Ino and Troxell offer a special attraction, a dancing diversissement; The Pit Show has Georgette, half and half, managed by Howard Harris, also several specimens of wild animals are introduced. Show has 4 attractive banners.

The aftershow concert features Fred Alberg, heavyweight wrestler, and Tiger Bill's Wild West, using 6 people and 3 head of stock. The reporter concluded his article by saying the show was well illuminated at night using two new Mathew plants of 125 voltage.

For the next week the show was in the near vicinity of New York City and then began a tour of Long Island beginning with Freeport, May 23. Other stands on the island included Hicksville, Farmingdale, Babylon, Bay Shore, Patchogue, Southampton, and Sag Harbor. Moving back to the mainland the show had four more dates then went into Connecticut at Greenwich on June 7.

Billboard notes about this time say that a feature of the parade was the Queen Wagon with Milly Rosette as Queen Marie with five lady assistants. She was also a singer and featured dancer in the spec.

The June 2, 1928 Billboard said that Merlin (Shorty) Hinkle, now producing clown, had recently added two new numbers and an advertisement in the same issue wanted a wild west team for the concert, novelty acts for the big show, two clowns, an outside man for the wrestler, and help in various departments. Later in the month a show ad wanted a mechanic for Chevrolet trucks, acts, as well as help in all departments. These ads seemed to indicate a considerable turnover in personnel in recent weeks.

Downie moved across Connecticut and was at Great Barrington, Mass. on June 15.

The following day the show was at Lee, Mass. and was visited by Isaac Marcks, who was a real pioneer among circus fans in recording pertinent facts about the many circuses he saw each year. His son, CHS Don Marcks, has kindly furnished the author all of the many notes his father made during the years he visited the Downie show. The elder Marcks made these notes following his visit to the 1928 Downie Bros. show.

"Downie Bros. Circus arrived here at Lee, Mass. after a trip from Great Barrington. They have 75 Chevrolet trucks. Their tents include a four pole big top; 4 pole sideshow and menagerie; 3 pole cookhouse; 3 pole kitchen top, 2 pole lunch stand, and 2 pole candy stand.

"The animals include 3 elephants, 2 horses, and 11 ponies. They have four cages on trailers containing, black bear and tapir; two lions; polar bears; and monkeys. There are also two cages of performing goats and dogs.

"A 12 piece band provided the music for the show program.

"The equipment is painted red. The show had 7 trucks for the big top; a stake and chain truck; 2 electric light plants; elephant truck; two trucks for horses and ponies; two trucks for wild animals; truck for greyhounds.

"In the sideshow are; minstrels; trained cockatoos; fortune teller; sword box; snakes; magic; knife throwing; sword walker; sword swallower; 4 cages of animals; 3 elephants; bally stand, 2 ticket boxes; 6 banners, plus a center banner.

"The No. 2 sideshow had a half man-half woman, a grave robber, giant rat, one ticket box. Tent is divided in half and has four banners.

"Two shows were presented to good crowds. The circus left here early in the morning and passed through Pittsfield on their way to North Adams."

Downie was the first show of the season in North Adams and had very good business. The show went back into New York at Hoosick Falls on June 19 and played five stands in the state. W. B. Leonard visited at Saratoga Springs, June 21, and wrote in the July 27, 1928 Billboard that the show was greatly improved since last June in both size and quality. Downie drew 3000 that day and at one performance the crowd was seated on the ground to the ringside. Leonard reported that William Polkingham had repalced Frank Maherey in charge of the No. 1 advance car.

The show moved on to Vermont to catch Manchester and Springfield, then played Claremont, N. H., June 27, and returned to Vermont for Bellow Falls and Brattleboro. A second visit to Massachusetts came next and the show was at Greenfield, June 30. Following Athol, Mass. on July 2 the show went into New Hampshire for Keene, Newport, Franklin, and White River Junction.

Returning to Vermont the show played Woodstock and the final New England stand came at Brandon, Vt., July 11, after which it was into New York for a lengthy stay.

THE LARGEST MOTOR CIRCUS IN THE WORLD
DOWNIE BROS
WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS
3 RINGS - ELEVATED STAGE - STEEL ARENA
\$200,000 - INVESTED - \$200,000

WORLD'S GREATEST WILD AND DOMESTIC ANIMAL ACTS

A Mighty Achievement in Clean Amusement

The Largest and Smallest Performing Elephants On Earth, Their Equals Do Not Exist!

DANCING, MUSICAL AND PLAY ACTING ELEPHANTS

Great Groups of Trained Wild Beasts

Magnificent and Instructional Zoological Collection Exhibiting Specimens from the Remotest Corners of the World.

PERFORMING FEET - A remarkable demonstration, showing that man's feet are the most perfect in the animal kingdom.

THE RIDICULOUS NEW SPLITTING ACTS AND TRICKS OF THE
GREAT COMPANY OF CLOWNS
 All New **FREE STREET PARADE** At Noon
2 COMPLETE PERFORMANCES RAIN OR SHINE
 At 2 and 8 P. M. Doors Open at 1 and 7 P. M.
 BE ON SHOW PRICES! EARLY TO SEE THE "SENSATIONAL" FEET SHOW AT 1 P. M.
 WILL EXHIBIT HERE AFTERNOON AND NIGHT ONE DAY ONLY

DUNKIRK THU JUNE 20

Downie Bros. Herald printed by Louisville (K6) Color Gravure Co. used for stand at Dunkirk, N.Y., Thurs, June 20, 1929
 Author's Collection.

An accident occurred at Carthage, July 23, when Mrs. James Heron and Mrs. Harry Coy, asst. manager of the candy stands, were severely burned in the afternoon when gasoline fumes exploded in Mrs. Heron's housecar. Both were sent to the hospital and the car body was demolished. Despite the accident the evening performance went on as scheduled.

Walter Nealand, well known in show circles at the time, visited Downie Bros. at Avon, N. Y., July 28. He wrote in the August 11, 1928 Billboard that the show had good business that day while he was a guest of Mr. Downie and Manager Heron. Nealand said that the show had 50 one, ton trucks and cages and 25 house cars and busses. Big top was a 90 with three 40's. Tom Atkinson, who formerly operated his own dog and pony circus on the west coast, presented the lion, leopard, and bear acts in the steel arena. He said there were a total of 28 motorized trucks in the daily street parade. In the parade are 6 cages, 3 elephants, 12 ponies, 3 bands, and the air callopie. The 3 elephants are transported in a large truck as are the ponies, trained

dogs, and goats. Downie makes an average of 50 mile jumps with no night drives. Cook-house leaves immediately after the afternoon show and breakfast is ready when the main fleet of trucks arrive at daybreak. Show has 2 light plants and gas and oil is furnished performers who own their own house cars. Nealand said that Andrew Downie was enthusiastic over his motorized circus and decalres he never will return to managing a railroad show. Business of late has been very good despite much rain.

While on the current New York state tour a cage trailer with 2 bears became detached from the pulling truck near Barnes and was "lost" for several hours. The bears, aside from being weary with the heat, were alright when found.

George Barlow III visited at Endicott, N.Y. on August 7 and said he was convinced more than ever that the truck show will eventually replace all 10 and 15 car railroad shows.

Downie himself was away from the show much of the time. In July he went scouting around New York state negotiating for some big features for next season and later rejoined the show in Vermont. When the show played his home town of Medina, N.Y. on July 30 the proceeds from the advance sale went to the benefit of the local Memorial Hospital.

The show remained in New York through most of August and overall business was said to have been good. Individual stands reporting good houses were Dansville, and Catskill, where many fans were on the lot. Also at Endicott the big show did fine business as well as Jack Sampson's sideshow.

Downie Bros. was at Franklin, N. J., August 24, which was followed by Hacketstown, Rahway, Keyport, Red Bank, Asbury Park and Lakewood.

The Aug. 25, 1928 Billboard printed a communication from Peggy Waddell, female impersonator, who was currently billed as Georgette, doing half and half, in the Downie Bros. pit show, saying the show was getting good money these days.

The following week The Billboard had good news in that both Mrs. Heron and Mrs. Coy, who were injured in the recent accident, had been discharged from the hospital and neither had been disfigured by the burns. Mrs. Coy went on to Havre de Grace while Mrs. Heron joined her husband on the show.

Around the first of September Mr. and Mrs. Downie were visiting in New York City and told the Billboard they were pleased with the season's business which was so far well ahead of 1927.

Hammornton, N. J., Sept 5, was a good day for Downie Bros. with many visitors and a fine take at the ticket wagon.

Moving south from New Jersey the show was at Milford, Del., Sept. 13, played Newark the next day, and visited Oxford, Pa. on the 15th. After a week in Pennsylvania the show moved into Maryland for 7 stands, the final one coming at Rockville, Sept. 30. Business continued good while in Maryland, the afternoon house at Westminster being almost capacity.

An advertisement in the Oct. 6, 1928 Billboard wanted a man to handle the Downie pit show on a percentage basis with a long season promised.

The Oct. 13, 1928 Billboard told of a fine run from Rockville, Md. to Enfield, N.C. where on October 1 the parade left the showgrounds on time and doors for the matinee opened right on schedule. The distance had been 256 miles. The show left Rockville at 4 a.m. Sunday morning, stopped at Fredricksburg, Va. at 6:30 a.m. where the cook tent was up and had breakfast ready. The cookhouse had left as usual immediately after supper on Saturday night. At breakfast all trucks were fueled and then proceeded, arriving in Richmond at 12:30. In another hour the fleet was in Petersburg where the trucks fueled again and lunch was passed out. The first of the trucks reached Enfield at 6 p.m. Sunday and the trouble car which brings up the rear came in at 11:30 p.m. Not one accident occurred, not even a flat tire. The show had traveled 146 miles of paved highway and 110 miles of Virginia red clay which was slushy. It was another record move for Andrew Downie, who today transports on trucks a show of the same size he transported on 20 railroad cars 4 years ago. (Walter L. Main in 1924). Mrs. Marie Heron was able to drive the house car this distance despite her accident back on July 23. The article concluded by saying that the Downie show had recently played southern Maryland territory which had not seen a circus in many years.

At Wilson, N. C., October 12, James Gallagher, who handled the show's banners got a tie in with a local merchant who owned a large gas balloon. The balloon was moored to the big top center pole with a large banner advertising the show. Gallagher had an outstanding season with banners in 1928 and while in Long Island secured an order from a major oil company for a banner to go on the largest elephant (Teddy) in parade for 60 days.

Downie's stand at Tarboro, N.C., October 15, saw opposition from Gentry Bros., 15 car railroad show, owned by Floyd and Howard King. Both shows throughout the territory were reportedly advertising heavily on the country routes. Walter D. Nealand, press agent of Rubin & Cherry Shows (railroad carnival) visited the Downie show at Tarboro. Rubin & Cherry at the time was only 18 miles away at Rocky Mount.

The show played five weeks in North Carolina. The Morales Family rejoined the show on October 22 for remainder of the season after being away 10 weeks playing fair dates in the south.

The Nov. 3, 1928 Billboard said that Rex Ingraham now had the Georgette half and half pit show on Downie Bros. and was playing to good business. No doubt Ingraham had taken over the show on a percentage basis as Downie had wanted in the October 6 advertisement.

The North Carolina tour came to a close at Selma on November 3 and then the headed northward through Virginia for the final week of the season. Final date of the



Scotch Kiltie band truck No. 21 with cage trailer in Downie Bros. street parade at Taunton, Mass. Aug. 22, 1929. Photo by John Cutler.

1928 season was at Farmville, Va. on November 12. During the last ten days of the season the show had seen many visitors from Ketrow Bros., Silvan-Drew, Gentry Bros. and Ringling-Barnum, all playing in the immediate area.

Downie returned to Havre de Grace quarters to get ready for the next season. Plans started early. The Dec. 1, 1928 Billboard had an advertisement saying that Downie Bros. Wild Animal Circus (Largest Motor Circus in the World) wanted for the 1929 season, side show acts, big show acts, advance men, desired to purchase two menage horses and two more leopards. An article in the same issue stated that most Downie performers, truck drivers, and workingmen had left Havre de Grace, and that the only departments open at present were the carpenter shop and animal barn. Leo Snyder was in charge of the woodworking shop, Tom Atkinson had the wild animals, and Charles Cooper, was boss elephant man. Mrs. Atkinson was breaking several new tricks for her goat and dog act. Andrew Downie was in New York and would later attend the Showmen's Ball in Chicago. He would return to quarters after the first of the year.

Final notes coming from the Downie quarters as the old year was rapidly coming to an end said that Charley Cooper was working out the 3 elephant acts daily in the ring barn, George Palmer was in charge of domestic animals, and Red Cavanaugh had the cat animals. Milford Manning was in charge of the mechanical department and Ted Premont was electrician and carpenter. Frank (Whitey) Creamer, animal trainer, joined Downie to shape up the wild animal numbers, evidently replacing Tom Atkinson. Carl Clark was breaking new dog acts. James Heron's new house car was completed in the carpenter shop by Leo Snyder and was said to be the last word in comfort and convenience. Just before the New Year it was announced that Don Taylor, punch and judy man, and ventriloquist, would be with Downie again in 1929.

The 1929 Season

The news of activities at Downie quarters after the first of the year came in the Jan. 12, 1929 Billboard which said that Andrew

Downie had returned to quarters. Leo Snyder was putting the trucks through the shops in first class style, the paint shop was in charge of Harry Leffler, Pete Hiner had been in Baltimore the last few days overhauling the motors at the Chevrolet plant and it was announced that the show would have three separate dog acts—all white spitz. Whitey Creamer had the lion act about ready and was now working on the leopards.

Towards the end of January, Al F. Wheeler, manager of the Silvan-Drew Motorized Circus, visited the Downie quarters and Manager Heron reported he had already received signed contracts from about half of the old billposters on the show.

In early February the sudden announcement came that Charles Sparks had purchased the Downie Bros. Circus. There had been no hints whatsoever in the trade publications that Sparks was interested in the show, however it was generally known that he had been restless since selling his own 20 car railroad, Sparks Circus, in December 1928 to Henry B. Gentry, who as it turned out was only acting as agent for the American Circus Corporation, and had indicated he was anxious to return to the white tops. The Feb. 9, 1929 Billboard which broke the news of the Sparks purchase didn't contain many details but said the Downie show last season was transported on 50 trucks, carried a small menagerie, and had a big top with seating capacity of about 2000. The Macon, Ga. Telegraph quoted Sparks that his new Downie show would remain in Havre de Grace this winter but would establish quarters in Macon following the season.

Sparks signed Jerome T. Harriman as general agent and Clyde H. Willard as manager of the advertising trucks. In mid-February the Harry Martinez Trio which had been on the Walter L. Main Circus was engaged for the coming season. William Allison was also signed as band director and began lining up musicians.

Sparks kept his new show only a month before selling it back to Downie. No reason was given in the press, evidently he changed his mind about returning to the road with another show. The March 2, 1929 Billboard which reported the sale of the show back to Downie quoted Downie as remarking that it would be considerably rebuilt and enlarged for the coming season. He said that several new trucks would be added to take care of extra seats and that



Tableau truck No. 17 decorated with crocodile paintings carries American Indians atop and pulls cage trailer in Downie Bros. street parade at Taunton, Mass., Aug. 22, 1929. Photo by John Cutler.

several new cages would be constructed. The show in 1929 would use 3 rings, an elevated stage, and a new steel arena for the performance. Downie also said that all contracts that Sparks had signed would be carried out, however it turned out that James M. Beach replaced Harriman as general agent, but Willard was retained as manager of the advertising cars. Other staffers announced were Joseph Gilligan, master of transportation, Charles F. Williams, chief truck mechanic, and James Heron, manager.

In early March the G. E. Wilson family was reengaged to go with Downie with George and son, Dime, to clown and Lillian to present her single trapeze act.

The March 2, 1929 Billboard contained a Downie advertisement wanting for the 1929 season, big show acts, sideshow acts, billposters, bannermen, and lithographers who can drive trucks. Also the show wanted to purchase two 4 horse sets of Shetland pony harness, collars, and hames, and 6 lengths of folding back reserve seats. For sale was hamburger and lunch stand privileges.

A week later it was announced that the show would open the new season April 20 at Havre de Grace, Whitey Creamer was pleased with the newly built steel arena and had broken a flock of pigeons to work in the mixed group. Additional information said that the advance would travel in 5 trucks and 2 sedans, William Allison would have an 11 piece band, T. O. Premont would be in charge of the light plants, Leo Snyder (Young Tiger Bill) would have charge of the wild west, and Fred Alberg, wrestler would be with it. Other signees included Steve Roberts, boss canvasman, W. L. Watkins, sideshow band leader, and Irwin M. Emmer, midget clown.

The March 16, 1929 Billboard carried the news that the Downie show for the first time would have a separate menagerie top and that all cages as well as ponies and stock used in the performance would be placed inside it as a free attraction. In previous seasons the animals had been in the sideshow. It was mentioned that several new trucks had been purchased, some of which would carry the menagerie canvas. Two

additional cages were built on trucks and two trucks were constructed for props and trunks. Gene Enos and wife were scheduled to return from Europe on March 17.

The official Downie Bros. roster for 1929 was as follows: Andrew Downie, prop; James Heron, manager; James M. Beach, general agent; Irish Horan, press agent back and supt. reserve seat tickets; Jack Sampson, manager of sideshow; Gene Enos, equestrian director and announcer; Joseph Gilligan, gen. supt; William Allison, musical director; Steve Roberts, supt. canvas; R. H. Hartman, supt. commissary dept; T. O. Premont, supt. lights; Carl M. Johnson, supt. props; George Palmer, supt. ring stock; Charles F. Williams chief mechanic; Joe Crossey, supt. working crew; Chas. Cooper, supt. elephants; Leo Snyder, boss carpenter; Whitey Creamer, supt. animals; Pete Hiner, blacksmith; Clyde H. Willard, mgr. adv. cars; Peck Amsden, legal adjuster. The show claimed to be transported on 75 trucks, trailers, and autos.

In late March Downie returned to quarters from New York where he had purchased a truckload of new parade wardrobe and a set of uniforms for the sideshow band.

The March 30, 1929 Billboard said that the show would have new canvas for the sideshow and pit show and that Leo Snyder and family had moved into their new housecar and were remodeling the old truck to carry their stock. Truck bodies were being built in quarters to fit on the additional chassis the show had purchased and it would take all the time between now and April 20 to get them ready. It was mentioned that the elephant truck had been fitted up to go in the parade this season and would carry the No. 1 band. Construction continued right up to opening date. Carl Clark also built a trailer to carry his dog and pig acts.

The April 13, 1929 Billboard said that the 5 advance vehicles were on their way and the show had a total of 14 billers. A week later it was announced that the George Hanneford Riding Troupe would join the show at the close of its engagement with the Chicago Stadium Circus and the Machedam brothers triple bar act had also been booked. The big top and other tents were set up at quarters on April 12 to await the opening 8 days later.

The 1929 season opened, Sat., April 20 at Havre de Grace with first road stand coming Monday, April 22 at Elkton, Md.

The May 4, 1929 Billboard very briefly



Sideshow band truck returning to lot from Downie Bros. street parade at Taunton, Mass., Aug. 22, 1929. Photo by John Cutler.

reviewed the show with headlines, "DOWNIE HAS FINE OPENING. Fair weather and big crowds at Havre de Grace Opening". The review read as follows.

"New canvas and everything brightly painted made an impressive appearance. The program under direction of Gene Enos ran off in mid-season form. Several new trucks and trailers have been added to the parade as well as some flashy wardrobe. Pit show has Georgette (half and half) in charge of Jimmy Baker. Harry Baker has a new lunch car. Two horses have been added to Art Boden's Wild West Concert.

"The 1929 Program—opens with a tournament, followed by Zelda Boden and Janie Walters, the 'girls that keep you guessing'; performing leopards; Lorenz Duo, acrobats and Mary Enos on the rolling globes; performing lions; Cecil Lowande and Pearce Merodia, men's principal riding acts; high jumping greyhounds worked by John and Anna White; the Walters and Martinez on the rings; mixed group of wild and domestic animals, presented by Capt. W. Creamer; clown band; trained goats, presented by Anna White and Mary Enos; Mijares on the wire; Walters Duo, Little Bit Lenhardt and Ella Harris, on swinging trapeze; Carl Clark's trained pigs; performing elephants by Anna White, Mary Enos, and Ella Harris; Little Bit Lenhardt, Zelda Boden, and Jane Walters on swinging ladders; pony drills by Carl Clark and John White; Machedam brothers, horizontal bar performers; Martinez Trio in head and hand balancing; the George Hanneford troupe of riders; Spitz dogs, worked by Anna White and Carl Clark; Gene and Mary Enos, high carrying perch pole act; 'Kicks', bucking mule by John White; Zelda Boden, Ella Harris, and Little Bit Lenhardt, iron jaw performers. Clown numbers are presented throughout the performance."

The early route took the show rapidly into Pennsylvania and it was at Lebanon on April 27. Following Bethlehem on May 1 the show went into New Jersey for Phillipsburg and Washington, then returned to Pennsylvania May 4 at Bangor. A single date was played in New York, May 7, at Port Jervis, then the show settled back into Pennsylvania for several weeks.

Weather for the first weeks of the 1929 season was bad. Rain, wind, and cold was

the fare at many stands and brought to mind memories of 1927 when the show faced similar circumstances. The May 18, 1929 Billboard said, "Downie's weather the past week has been anything but agreeable but business has held up. The mountains and spring road repairs also caused worries to general sup. Joe Gilligan." Andrew Downie had returned to the show after a stay at his home in Medina, N.Y. A new leopard was expected soon. The following week the Billboard said the cold and windy weather for the past 10 days had let up a bit and that the hilly country with many detours had not interfered with the show getting in and setting up on time. Walter Driver visited and made arrangement to make a new big top. George Hanneford had another horse sent from his home and now had five in the act.

The June 1, 1929 Billboard reported that cold and rainy weather continued with Downie in the Pennsylvania mountains and necessitated several lot changes but business had held up and no parades missed. It said that Jimmy Gallagher had a dandy line of banners at Kane, Pa., May 20, and the show did almost capacity business the next day in Warren. Owing to a dispute in the old fairgrounds lot in Warren the show paid the fee of \$25.00 to the community chest instead of to the city.

Both the weather and business was good at Greenville, Pa. on May 27 where George Hanneford and family left to fulfill a contract at the Shrine Convention in Los Angeles. Three of their horses were left on the Downie show and a rider pinch hit for George until he returned 10 days later. The show received an excellent afternotice in the Record-Argus following its stand in Greenville, Fred Solomon purchased a new truck to transport his seals.

Downie moved into Ohio at Ravenna, May 29, for its first visit to that state. The show had ideal weather, good roads, and fine business during the initial week.

At Fremont, Ohio, June 10, the new big top from Driver arrived and was put in the air. It was the largest used so far by the show and The Billboard said it was a 110 ft. round with three 40's, however later information indicates it was only a 100 ft. round with three 40's and photo no. seems to agree with that size. The new marquee had been put into use a week or so earlier. A new truck was received in Ohio and buckskin Bill and wife, sharpshooters and knife throwers, joined and strengthened the wild west concert considerably.

The route we have on hand for the 1929 season is pretty sketchy in places and not too many stands are known during the final weeks in Ohio but it was at Bucyrus, June 4, Bowling Green, 8th, Painesville, 15th, and Ashtabula, 17th. It next moved into western Pennsylvania and was soon in the Buffalo area where the Billboard reported there were many visitors. Two new trucks were purchased which now gave the fleet almost all new vehicles. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sparks spent the weekend on the show while near Buffalo.

The show played Andrew Downie's home town of Medina, N.Y. on July 4. The next few weeks took the circus on an extensive tour of central and upper New York. The July 27, 1929 Billboard said Downie Bros. had ideal weather and excellent business in the lake country. Long jumps and highway rebuilding work made transportation a problem at times but Joe Gilligan has yet to fail to get the show in and ready on time. The report said the entire fleet of trucks had now been replaced with new Chevrolet sixes. Andrew Downie spent a week on the advance, then returned to the show. It was mentioned that the George Hanneford family riding act had Cecil Lowands, Albert De Sect, and Bessie Costello as riders with George as the feature attraction. Other notes said that Mrs. Marie Heron's candy stand had a new top, Sam B. Dill visited the show, and Charlie Duple, trombone player, joined at Canton, N.Y. July 13.

The Aug. 10, 1929 Billboard reported that James Gallagher had the largest bannerline of the season at Plattsburg, N.Y. July 22. Business in the Adirondack region was said to have been quite satisfactory. The mountains made travel rather difficult but the show had yet to miss a meal, performance, or be late for parade, Harry Sayer's lunch car opened for business during a long run over the mountains one Sunday, serving coffee and lunches to the fleet crew which was delayed at a steep point getting the heavy trucks over the grades. Members of the show visited the grave of Sig Sautelle at Glen Falls, N.Y.

Downie Bros., which had remained in New York practically all of July, left the state to enter New Hampshire at Woodville on August 2. The next day it was at Barre, Vt. and played St. Johnsbury, August 5. Going into Johnsbury, a truck driven by George Sealey went out of control and crashed into several other autos. The collision caused a fire and the driver was injured.

At Littleton, N. H., Ray Glaum, who had been with Gentry Bros., joined Downie as an aerial performer and Lou Walton, formerly with Christy Bros., came on to clown.

Downie Bros. 3 elephants, Teddy, Tena, and Babe returning to lot following street parade at Taunton, Mass., Aug. 22, 1929. Photo by John Cutler.



After playing through Vermont and New Hampshire the show went into Massachusetts, August 12, at Leominster and remained for about two weeks. Webster, on August 26, was the final date and then the show moved into Connecticut at Rockville. John Ringling visited at Danbury, Conn. on September 2.

Moving out of New England the show played Suffern, N.Y., September 3, and The Billboard sent a reporter from its New York Office to give the Downie show a more thorough review than that which appeared earlier in the season. His account was printed in the Sept. 14, 1929 issue and was the most comprehensive coverage of the show all season. The article said that the excessive heat affected business in the afternoon but the big top was filled at night. He remarked that Andrew Downie has realized his ambition in making the motorized circus a financial and artistic success. Manager Heron said, "Business is far in excess of last year, especially good was the tour thru the summer resort sections of New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire. In Ohio we had 4 weeks of satisfactory business." Other notes said the show traveled on 85 trucks and privately owned vehicles, 225 people were on the payroll, including 50 performers. One half ton trucks are used except for the animal trucks which are larger. (Author's note. There seems to be some conflict among various observers as to the tonnage of the Downie trucks. One account said they were all one ton vehicles while this reporter seems to indicate only the animal trucks were one ton. In all probability there was a variety of tonnage, from half ton, one ton, and possibly a few even larger. Equipment in general looked splendidly. The pit and sideshows have attractive banner fronts and the canvas is in good condition. Lighting effects at the night performance are exceptionally good. The program is vastly superior to last season and is presented in three rings and steel arena. William Allison now has a total of 12 pieces and at Suffern the band put on new uniforms for the first time. The sideshow top is a 50 ft. round with two 20's and had a 12 bannerline. It was managed by Jack Sampson who had the following attractions; Nelson, sword swallower; Maryland Minstrels with W. L. Watkins, band leader, Nellie Hall, snake enchantress; Claud Sampson, Australian cockatoo act; James Belmont, punch and

judy and magic; King's Kilties Scotch Band; Hawaiaian Village with Rose Castro and Pearl Agnew; and Oscar, the tattooed wonder.

Pit Show No. 1, managed by James F. Baker, featured Georgette, half and half, and Pit Show No. 2, managed by Joe Wolf had freak animals.

Three lion cubs born the day before were being nursed by a goat. Show is well advertised and uses an attractive line of paper by Erie and Donaldson Lithographing Co. The advance now had 16 billposters and was using 5 trucks and 2 sedans.

The current 1929 Program was listed as follows:

Colorful Opening Tournament

1. In ring 2, suprise animal novelties by animal jockeys.
2. Zelda Boden and Jamie Walters, the girls who keep you guessing.
3. Clown contingent on track.
4. Performing elephants in 3 rings worked by Mitzie, Charles Cooper, and Ella Harris.
5. Equestrian artistes, Cecil Lowande, Deseck, and Merodia.
6. Performing lions in steel arena.
7. Majores on tight wire.
8. Walters and Martinez on aerial rings.
9. Capt. Frank Cramer presented mixed group of wild and domestic animals.
10. Clowns on hippodrome track.
11. John and Anna White, high jumping greyhounds.
12. Head to head balancing, Ring 1, Martinez Trio; Ring 3, Mary Enos.
13. Machedon Bros. on horizontal bars.
14. Clowns.
15. Trained white Eskimo dogs worked by Misses White, Boden, and Carl Clark.
16. Swinging ladders, Ray Glaum, Misses Boden, and Walters.
17. Performing elephants, Ella Harris.
18. Clown band.

Art work used to advertise Downie Bros. Wild Animal Circus in 1928. In all probability the show had a litho of this design as well as other printed material. Pfening Collection.



19. Ring, 1, educated Holland goats, Miss White; Ring 2, trained Florida razorback hogs, Farmer Clark; Ring 3, three goats worked by Mlle Mitzie.
20. Introduction of concert features, Art Boden, Buckskin Bill, Mexican Joe, Zelda Boden, and Jess Snyder.
21. George Hanneford Family, riding act.
22. Burlesque boxing bout.
23. Ring 1, Carl Clark's educated English ponies; Ring 2, Fred's seals; Ring 3, John White's educated ponies.
24. Clowns.
25. Swinging trapeze acts, featuring Walters Duo, Misses Flora and Harris.
26. Clowns.
27. Gene and Mary Enos, high carrying perchpole act.
28. John White and his bucking mule.
29. Iron jaw, Zelda Boden, Ella Harris, Ray Glaum, Ella Harris sings twice during course of the show.

At Port Chester, N. Y., Edward Ballard of the American Circus Corporation visited Circus history was to be made in a few days when John Ringling would purchase the Corporation's six operating railroad circuses. Possibly, Ballard was in the New York City area at the time to close the deal.

Downie next headed southward through-out New Jersey and Delaware. A visitor on the lot in Lakewood, N.J., Sept. 11, wrote the Billboard that the show was as bright as the day it left quarters last spring. The show that day had made a 26 miles jump from Keyport. After Delaware the show entered it's home state of Maryland and was at Pocomoke City, Sept. 20. It played Annapolis, Sept. 30, and the Billboard said that the run to that city was made in record time despite a long ferry move. The special boat that was engaged to transport the show proved to be too small so some trucks and all of the passenger cars had to take the regular ferry. Andrew Downie returned to the show that day from a visit to his home in Medina. He said there had been a noticeable lack of opposition in Eastern territory this season. Business had been good with capacity houses during the entire previous weeks including some turn-aways. Vernon Ott, punch and judy man,

joined at Annapolis and it was announced that 3 trucks were added to the fleet to divide some of the heavy loads of baggage.

Manassas, Va., scheduled for October 2, was completely lost due to heavy rain, making it necessary to cancel both performances. Moving on southward through Virginia the show played Warrenton, Culpepper, and was at Orange on October 5 for the final stand in the state. Next came a long run to Oxford, N.C. where performances were given on the 7th. The Oct. 19, 1929 Billboard told the story of this and other recent developments on the show. Downie, after the 227 miles run from Orange, arrived in Oxford early Sunday morning with little difficulties. The article said that Annapolis had been dampened with the hardest rains of the season. Continuous downpours from Sunday thru Thursday left lots and highways in bad conditions causing a cancellation of Manassas, Va., first in 3 years. Show moved into Warrenton for turnaway business. Paul Bonel, who had recently joined the Machedon Bros. bar act, strengthened it very much. Andrew Downie was reported to be in New York City negotiating for additional menagerie animals.

The show continued in North Carolina for the next couple of weeks. It played among other stands, Washington, October 2, Smithfield, 19th, and was at Aberdeen on October 25 when news reached the lot of the bad fire at the show's quarters in Havre de Grace. The Nov. 2, 1929 Billboard told the story proclaiming in headlines that Downie's winter quarters had been destroyed by fire on October 25. The buildings which housed the show were destroyed by the fire of undetermined origin. In addition to the structures, considerable show property including cages and commissary equipment was lost. The loss was partly covered by insurance. A building secured during the summer which was to be used as a wood-working, machine, and paint shop, will

Closeup of Downie Bros. monkey cage truck, season of 1929. Pfening Collection.



be used to house the show until additional buildings are secured. Downie said the fire in no way would prevent the extensive rebuilding that was planned.

The final week of the season was alright as the show wound up it's tour of North Carolina and moved into Virginia where the final stand came at Martinsville on November 5. Five stands produced fair business while the finale had a good matinee and packed house in the evening. The Billboard in wrapping up the Downie 1929 season said that in recent days Honest Bill Newton had been a visitor as well as people from John Robinson Circus which was close by. Gene Enos had removed the cast from his broken foot due to a recent accident which had prevented him from performing but he had continued to serve as equestrian director. James M. Beach, general agent, was quoted as saying he had covered 13 states with total mileage, according to his speedometer, of 27,772. He had driven a new 6 cylinder sedan and had only one flat tire during the season. Jimmy Gallagher, who had the banners, said that 1929 had been the best season ever for him. The show was out 29 weeks, played 174 stands, with only 7 stands not having local banners displayed in the parade and big top. Irish Horan, Downie press agent, said the 1929 tour had been excellent except for the southern tour.

The October stock market crash heralded the beginning of the great depression but it's full impact would not be felt for several months. However, two circus casualties occurred in October, the fore-runner of many to come within the next few years. Silvan-Drew closed at Hertford, N.C., October 26, and was sold at auction by it's receiver at Greensboro, N.C. on December 14. Gentry Bros., a 15 car rail-

road circus owned by Floyd and Howard King, had a disastrous tour of the Carolinas and folded at Paris, Tenn., due to bad business and foul weather. It went into the hands of a receiver and would soon be sold piecemeal.

The sale of Gentry Bros. property was held at West Baden, Ind. where it had been stored following it's close. Andrew Downie was present at the sale and according to the Dec. 21, 1929 Billboard purchased quite a bit of property, including canvas, air calliope, poles, rigging, and a number of animals. The Gentry property was sold by the Donaldson Lithographing Co. which had foreclosed on it for past due bills. CHS Bruce Tracy has furnished us with a photostat of a most interesting letter signed by James Heron, written to a "Friend Carl" on December 9, 1929, which told in detail of the Downie purchase of Gentry equipment. The letter read in part as follows.

"Mr. Downie just got back from West Baden, Ind. He bought all the animals with the Gentry show except the elephants and all the canvas with the show. Gilligan has left with 4 trucks to get the animals and canvas. Calliope, poles, rigging etc. is coming in a baggage car.

"He got 2 camels, 3 menage horses, polar bear, 2 lions, tiger, leopard, llama, emu, big riding monk, small monks, and a lot of other stuff. Also all the parade and spec wardrobe.

"We will have a great show this year. Got the Wirth Family signed up. Also the Morales troupe, the Martinez trio, Karl Larkin trio, and a lot of others."

A further Billboard note said that since the Downie canvas itself is practically all new the Gentry canvas will be stored in

quarters to be used as an emergency substitute.

The Dec. 21, 1929 Billboard said the Downie trucks going to West Baden made the trip over the National Highway and Cumberland Mountains in two and a half days. Very few details were given on how the show was making out in quarters, where they located buildings to replace those lost in the fire etc., however work had already begun. Ted Premont had started overhauling the light plants, and the new ring barn being erected would be completed in two weeks. Jimmy Heron had recovered from a severe case of flu which had laid him up since the last of October. Gene Enos had fully recovered from his fall last September and he and his wife were now working a vaudeville circuit. Fred Buchanan was a recent visitor at quarters. Other notes said that Harry Leffler would again be in charge of the paint shop and that Rodney Harris would direct the 1930 band.

So as the curtain rang down on 1929, the fourth season of Downie Bros., Andrew Downie reflected on the success of his motorized circus. The season, perhaps the best overall season for all circuses since 1919, had been good to Downie's show. The show had grown steadily over the four seasons and the performance had improved remarkably. There were acts, such as the George Hanneford Riding Act, which had played with Sells-Floto and other very large circuses, and a great many others which would be fully capable of appearing in the program of the big railroad shows, now appeared with Downie Bros. The show was getting good publicity everywhere and the circus world was at last convinced that the large motorized show was here to stay.

SEASONS GREETINGS



FROM THE STAFF AND PERSONNEL
OF CARSON & BARNES CIRCUS



Let us blow our horn!
and Wish you a Happy, Healthy
and Musical Holiday Season
The Windjammers Unlimited is a Circus Music
Historical Society dedicated to the recording
and preservation of all types of circus music.
Help us do this! For more information write:
Ward Stauth
R.R. 5, Box 103
Corydon, Indiana 47112

1819

marks the introduction of the illustrated
newspaper advertisement in American circus
history. James West inserted such an ad in the
Chilliocothe (Ohio) *Scioto Gazette* in July
of that year. There are no copies of that
paper available in the present market. However,
I have located some copies of the *New York
Evening Post* of September,

1820

The same cut that was used in Ohio appears in
these ads. In other words I am offering the
original circus advertising cut. These are not
reproductions. I will send the entire four page
paper to you for \$10.00, postpaid. I am reserv-
ing tow copies for myself. (Library surplus,
some age spotting).

Stuart Thayer
276 Sumac Lane
Ann Arbor, Michigan
48105

SEASON'S

GREETINGS

HOXIE AND BETTY TUCKER

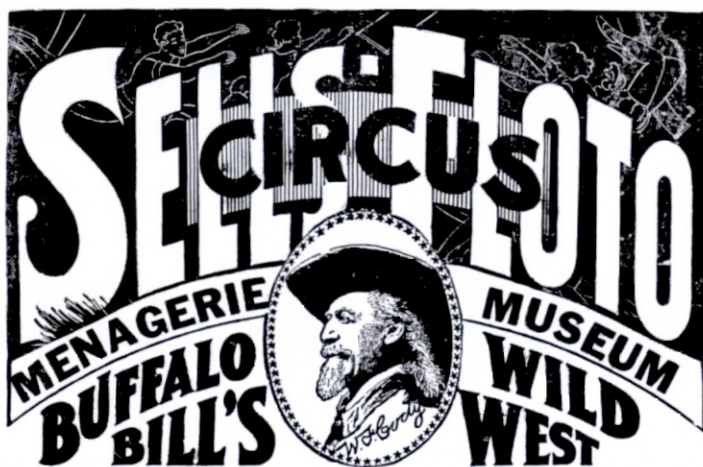
HOXIE'S GREAT AMERICAN CIRCUS

HOXIE BROS. CIRCUS

Seasons Greetings

FROM THE STAFF OF





WITH COL. W. F. CODY (BUFFALO BILL) HIMSELF APPEARING PERSONALLY AT EACH PERFORMANCE

SELLS-FLOTO CIRCUS

1914-1915

By Gordon M. Carver

1914

After a year of advance publicity the appearance of Buffalo Bill in the Sells-Floto Circus became a reality. With a feature of this magnitude there was ample justification for a substantial enlargement of the show.

For the last several years the train had been traveling on 28 cars but now, the train was increased in one big jump to 43. There were twenty flats, eleven stocks, ten sleepers and two cars in advance (there was some indication that the advance had three cars but this is not proven). This for the first time put it definitely in the big show class. In addition it now enlarged its big top to six center poles — a 160 foot round with five 50 foot middle pieces. The reserves were fifteen high starbacks, three more rows than in prior years, and the blues were increased by three rows to twenty-one rows high. The picture of the interior of the big top which appeared in the May 9 The Billboard gives an excellent idea of its size. The seating capacity was said to be 14,000 but was more likely to be in the neighborhood of 10,000 or 12,000. But whatever it was, it was most certainly very close to that

of the two big ones, Ringling Bros. Shows and the Barnum & Bailey show. The performance was given in three rings and two stages (both Ringling and B & B used three rings and four stages) and a hippodrome track about twenty-five feet wide. While it was a big tent, the rest of the show, the menagerie in particular could not compare with either of the big ones.

Although we have no count of the cages in the menagerie for this year we know that the number of cages, even at its largest never exceeded more than about fourteen or fifteen while the two big shows each had in the neighborhood of twenty-five or more. Further the elephants while both of the two big shows had twenty-five or thereabouts.

Perhaps the best indication of the disparity in size is exemplified by the length of the parades. In Des Moines, Iowa, the show "day and dated" the Ringling Bros., of which more later. Both shows paraded. A reliable reporter in making a detailed comparison of the two shows stated that while it took the Sells-Floto parade twelve

The Sells-Floto Circus presented a vast spread of canvas during the 1914 season. The 160 foot big top with five 50 foot middles in the background. In the center is an 8 pole menagerie top, with stiped side-wall. This photo was taken in Portland, Oregon. Eddie Jackson Collection.

minutes to pass, the Ringling parade took nineteen minutes, indicating that it was half again as long.

So while Sells-Floto still did not have the inventories of either of the big ones, it was now large enough so that the average circus goer was for the most part unaware of the differences in size. Further, it was still charging only 25 cents general admission compared to 50 cents that the larger shows were getting, so it was a bargain no matter how we look at it.

As it had for several years now, it again chose Albuquerque for its opening stand on Saturday, March 28 where both shows were given to packed tents. In addition to March 28 being its opening date, this was also the day that Alice, the prolific mother of the Sells-Floto elephant herd, and perhaps the most prolific of all elephants in the U.S., gave birth to her second baby, Tambon. Snyder was again the father. Since the birth was so imminent it had been felt that it would be wiser to leave Alice in Denver where the facilities for the birth and care of the baby would be better than on the road. Tambon a male, weighed in at 160 pounds and was described as in perfect health. We do not know how soon Tambon and Alice joined the show on tour but they were both with it when the show played San Francisco April 22-26.

Following the opening came, on Monday, El Paso, Douglas, Tuscon, Phoenix, and Yuma, all Arizona. Two days were used for the fairly long run into San Diego on Monday April 6. The show then played around southern California for several days, including Pasadena 11 for the best business ever had there, reaching Los Angeles 13-15. Here they had two near capacity houses and one turnaway. A quick run north brought them to Oakland 20-21 where both matinees were good and the evenings packed.

The next day, Wednesday April 22, they arrived in San Francisco for five days. The lot was a new one at Twelfth and Market streets and very crowded for the new bigger show making it necessary to put cookhouse and draft stock tops on another lot two blocks away. Two parades were given on the 22nd and the 24th. Business was good but there were no turnaways.

The program was still as it had been on





After a year of advance advertising William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody appeared with the Floto show in 1914. He is shown here in a carriage pulled by two horses owned by Rhoda Royal, Grant and Custer. Moxie Hanley photo.

opening day when the hits had been the Alpine Family; the Dellameads; the Luckey sisters; Mlle. Zora with the elephants and her mixed group of wild animals; Capt. and Margaret Ricardo with lions; Rhoda Royal's horses; the Stickneys, Hobsons, and Alex Lowande, riders; the Five Ferris Wheel Girls; and of course Buffalo Bill and his wild west group. The new Spec "On The Warpath" was very well received. The Program follows:

No 1—

On the Warpath introducing Buffalo Bill. Followed by Rhoda Royal's maypole and flower festival with the men in red and light blue and the ladies in white all on horseback.

No 2—

Ring 1—Mrs. Rhoda Royal showing Muggins baby elephant, pony and dog.

Ring 2—Mlle. Lucia Zora with the herd five elephants

Ring 3—Kas and Mo, baby elephants shown by Nathan McKay

No 3—

Ladies principal riding act

Ring 1—Emily Stickney

Ring 2—Stella Hobson

Ring 3—Emma Stickney

No 4—

On the hippodrome track — Spader Johnson's clown band

No 5—

Stage 1—Capt. and Margaret Ricardo's lions in the steel arena

Stage 2—Lucia Zora's and Fred Alispaw's mixed animal group in the steel arena

No 6—

Ring 1—Irene Montgomery and her statue horse

Ring 2—Delamead troupe in classic poses

Ring 3—Alice Brahm and her statue horse

No 7—

Ring 1—Homer Hobson jockey act

Ring 2—Alex Lowande somersault rider

Ring 3—Ab Johnson hurdle act

No 8—

Clowns frolic on the stages ending with Kelly Bros. "Aerial Wedding". (new edition)

No 9—

Rhoda Royal's troupe of famous menage and tango dancing horses

Ring 1—Three blacks ridden by Irene Montgomery, Julia King, Lou Kelly

Ring 3—Three whites ridden by Alice Brahm, Capt. Sharp, Mabel Chipman

On the hippodrome track — Miss Rhoda Royal and her bridleless horse, Viola Donovan, Flora Robinson, Leo Hamilton, Don Keragh, Fred Collier and Austin King, all peerless riders on outstanding mounts.

No 10—

Stage 1—Harry Bayfield and associate clowns

Stage 2—John Albion and associate clowns

No 11—

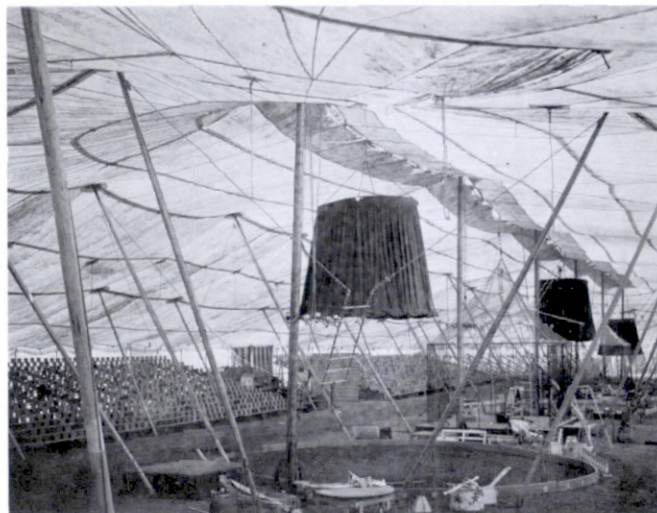
Ring 1—Las Souzers Nagomas, wire act; Fred Biggs, wire act

Stage 1—Mons. Lowande, bounding wire; Dracula, contortion

Ring 2—Alpine Family, double tight wire

Stage 2—Hershey, contortion

The cookhouse range wagon No. 91 was the first wagon off the flats at this unloading in Redlands, California. Carver Collection.



This new big top, with six center poles, was used in 1914. There was a steel arena on each of two stages. Note the almost complete lack of aerial act rigging. All lighting apparently came from the eight round gas burners on each center pole. Carver Collection.

Ring 3—Maude Johnson, tight wire; Degraffes, tight wire

No 12—

Over and on the track — Flying ladders; Miss Smith, Viola Stirk, Irene Montgomery; Fred Rouer, upside down man; Mabel Chipman, single trapeze; Rhoda Royal's baby elephant Muggins

On the Track —

Spader Johnson in his breakaway automobile

No 13—

Ring 1—Four white liberty horses trained by Austin King

Stage 1—Rhoda Royal's dogs and ponies

Ring 2—Capt. Sharpe with a troupe of hyneys

Stage 2—Hohse and Sterling, balancing pole

Ring 3—Four black liberty horses trained by Fred Collier

On the Track —

Ab Johnson and Jack Harris with Snowball, the comedy mule

No 14—



This group of unusual animals was on the Floto show in 1914. They were half zebra and half buro. The animals were raised on a government experimental farm in Maryland. Pfening Collection.

In three rings — revolving tables, clowns, dogs and ponies

No 15—

Ring 1—Ariel Luckeys, iron jaw

Stage 1—Lohse and Sterling, flying rings

Ring 2—Alpine Family on Roman rings

Stage 2—DeGraffs, comedy acrobats

Ring 3—Five Ferris Wheel Girls

Over the Track —

Kelly Brothers, comedy ladder; Plamadon Brothers, comedy ladder; Dracula, aerial contortion; Maude Johnson and Irene Montgomery, aerial ladders.

No 16—

Stages 1 and 2—Captain Devlin's Zouaves closing with a wall scaling

No 17—

On the Warpath, a thrilling spectacle of past and present. Arrival of the stage coach — attack by the indians — rescue by the cowboys.

No 18—

Three rings, Quadrille on horseback by the cowboys and cowgirls — trick and fancy roping by Tex McCloud, Fred Carlos, Carlos Meles and L. Smith-Tex McCloud ropes five horses abreast — Wild Horse Mike, Tex McCloud and Bill Cheesborg ride the outlaws, Blue Dog, Redford, Pie Face, Jiggers and Pinto.

No 19—

Indian bareback riding

Ring 1—Homer and Stella Hobson with a party of indians headed by Chief Iron Cloud

Stage 1—Chief Ghost Dog and other indians

Ring 2—Emma and Emily Stickney with party of indians headed by Chief Strong Talk

Stage 2—Indians headed by Chief Bear Shield

Ring 3—Alex Lowande and indian party headed by Chief High Wing

No 20—

Ring 1—Shorty Maynard and hurdle mule

Stage 1—Skatorial frolic by clowns

Ring 2—Ab Johnson and hurdle mule

Stage 2—Clowns

Ring 3—Don Darrgh and hurdle mules

No 21—

Grand hippodrome races and other thrilling events

Unlike today's circuses, music was an important part of any show. Of course, the music was needed for the parades too. When the 1914 season opened Sells-Floto Circus had a twenty-eight piece band with Karl King directing, his first year in this capacity. He was to stay with Sells-Floto for three years as director of the band before he went on to Barnum & Bailey. He was still a young man in his twenties at this time.

After San Francisco the show continued to have good business through the central part of California. In San Jose 27 they had two packed houses and at Petaluma 29 they had a good afternoon house but only a fair one at night as they did the next day at Santa Rosa. Here the side show was put up in the middle of a grove of trees and the horse tops were not erected. They started May in Berkeley and were in Fresno 5 and Sacramento 7. They continued to move up the coast and on May 20 were in Centralia, Wash. They stayed in this area for another three weeks, including Tacoma 22, Seattle 28-30, Walla-Walla June 2 and Pendleton 3 before moving eastward.

When the season started there were 22 clowns with the show. There were many featured skits. In fact Sells-Floto perhaps more than other shows of the time made much of the clowns. In some ways it was a reversion to the days of the one ring circuses when the clown was a featured performer with "spot lighted" acts. Some names which old-timers may recognize, and some of whom were later on the big time, were Spader Johnson, Shorty Maynard, Louis Plamondon, Jack Klippell, John Albion and Fred Biggs.

On June 5 moving eastward they entered Idaho at Payette followed by Boise. They were in Pocatello 9 followed by Logan, Utah, and Salt Lake City. Here they had a good afternoon and had them strawed at night. The next week was spent in Colorado starting at Greeley 15, then two days in Denver and finishing with Colorado Springs, Pueblo and La Junta. Denver gave the show the best two days of business it had ever had there. But tragedy also struck, for in the city where he was born only three months earlier, the show's baby elephant, Tambo, died. Alice, although prolific was



This six horse hitch pulled the steam calliope in the 1914 parade of the Sells-Floto Circus. Pfening Collection.

not a good mother as she would not nurse her babies and the artificial milk that they were fed did not seem to have the ingredients needed for their good health and life.

Also Denver saw a new side show band joining. This band, which had eleven men was bigger than most big show bands of today. For five cents the side show was a real bargain. There was the Bayrooty troupe of "oriental dancers", a ventriloquist, optical illusions, a bag puncher, a snake enchantress, palmist, a tattooed man, strong man, a sword swallower and Prince Mungo and his trained alligator. After all these years we finally learn his specialty. And it is worth noting that there was not one "freak" in the show, just novelty acts.

In addition to this side show, across the midway was a second show in which Capt. and Margaret Ricardo entered various cages of wild animals. Their performances were, of course, quite limited since not much could be done in the confines of an ordinary cage wagon. But it did bring in a few more nickels. There was also a pit show with the "Strangest Girl Alive" and a den of rattle snakes.

They opened the week of June 22 at Hutchinson, Kan., and then went to Wichita, Emporia, Topeka and closed the week with two days in Kansas City, Mo. Friday gave top business. Both shows were turnaways with the evening show being sold out fifteen minutes before show time. Saturday also gave big business.

Lincoln and Omaha were next. Then moving through South Dakota they arrived in Minneapolis for two days July 6-7 followed by St. Paul 8. Minneapolis gave very good business. The city was very well billed. A particularly good hit was made by the opposition brigade, headed by Al Butler, Special Agent, when the entire side of an eight story building downtown opposite the post office was covered with pictorial paper and large date bills.

This was almost the exact midpoint of the season. From here they swung west through North Dakota and then up into Canada for two days at St. Boniface 13-14 (a suburb of Winnipeg). From there they moved further west into Regina 18, Edmon-



The range wagon used by the cookhouse is pictured here with the circus chefs in action in 1914. Moxie Hanley Photo.



This 1914 photo shows the ticket wagon used for a number of years on the Floto show. It is lettered "World's Greatest Horse Acts" on the side under the side windows. Moxie Hanley Photo.

ton 22-23, Calgary 24-25 and finished two and a half weeks in Canada at Fernie, B.C., 29. Then they were back into the States at Kalispell, Mont., 30, an afternoon only at Sand Point, Id., 31 and August 1 at Spokane. Here they had a very bad lot far out with a resulting very long parade, but the show started on time.

In looking at the route of Sells-Floto for 1914 one wonders about its rationale. It appeared that they could not make up their mind whether they wanted to go east or west, for now a fast run was started that in five weeks was to get them to the very eastern edge of the mid-west at Cleveland. But first they hit Butte, Mont., August 3, Great Falls 6 and Lewiston 7 for another afternoon only to capacity crowds. Then they were in Sheridan, Wy., 10 for a Monday stand. Sunday had been spent painting the show for the second time during the season. It is evident that the management felt that good maintenance and appearance was quite important. Later that week in Columbus, Neb., 14 they played the first of two day and date stands with Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows in less than a week.

The second was at Des Moines 19. Much was made of this and *The Billboard* sent a special reporter to cover the event. The Ringling show after an uneventful 82 mile run in from Atlantic was all on the lot and ready to parade by 9 a.m. The Sells-Floto show on the other hand had a derailment leaving Creston, 92 miles away and were delayed considerably. Their last wagon did not reach the lot, a new one on the north side of town on Sixth Ave., a very long haul, until ten o'clock. Both shows wanted to parade last, but Ringling finally gave up waiting and started shortly after 11 a.m. It was about noon when the parade passed the Kirkwood Hotel downtown. It took nineteen minutes for it to pass.

At the end of the parade spielers announced that this was the end of the circus parades and urged everyone to follow the parade to the circus. But following them came Sells-Floto spielers announcing that their parade would be along in five minutes.

Actually it was 45 minutes before it appeared. However, most of the crowds waited patiently. When it did come it took twelve minutes to pass.

As to business, it appeared that proportionate to the seating capacity the Sells-Floto show did a little better business. In the afternoon both shows had about five-sixths capacity, although Ringling had more of its reserved seats filled than did Sells-Floto. But in the evening easily outdrew the Ringling show. However, while it was clear that the Ringling show maintained its reputation, the Sells-Floto Circus "had a suspicious introductory to Des Moines and at once leaped into popularity".

The men that were getting the show over the road and making it able to compete with the big ones on an equal footing were, almost without exception, old timers with Sells-Floto. Fred Hutchinson was the manager and Capt. Bill Curtis was Master Mechanic (a new title) as well as Superintendent of Canvas. Others who were familiar were E.C. Warner, General Agent; Courtney Riley Cooper (well known author and short story writer) Advance Press Agent; Eddie Jackson, press agent with the show; and Henry Gilbertson, Superintendent of Privileges and now also Assistant Manager.

An unusual attraction on a circus was this merry-go-round that was on the show in 1915. It required two wagons, but was quickly set up. Circus World Museum Collection.



The performance was still being directed by the able Rhoda Royal with Robert Stickney assisting and as previously mentioned, Karl King and his band providing the music. Fred Alispaw still took care of the elephants and the menagerie as well as appearing in the ring. The working departments were handled by Dixie Engle, cookhouse; George Stumpf, baggage stock; G.H. Embleton, lights; Charles Luckey, props; Elias Meister, ring stock; and George Brown, trainmaster. As an interesting sidelight on what was needed to keep a circus moving in those pre-mechanized days, there were two harness makers and three blacksmiths.

After Des Moines the week was filled out with Iowa City, Cedar Rapids and Dubuque where they had another late arrival with the parade not reaching downtown until two o'clock. The following week the show was in Milsaukee, Oshkosh and Racine, Waukegan, Gary and Elkhart. They still apparently were not ready to challenge Ringling Bros. hold on Chicago, for while they skirted the Windy City they did not invade it. The following week was all in Michigan — starting August 1 at Grand Rapids followed by Kalamazoo which was billed but lost due to a washout of the rail-

road tracks, Battle Creek, Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw. The next week opened in Detroit, Sept. 7, followed by Toledo, two days in Cleveland, and closed out in Akron and Canton. Four more days in Ohio at Columbus, Springfield, Dayton and Hamilton ended the "eastern tour for 1914 and they now turned west into Indiana at Richmond and Muncie.

Three and a half weeks were now left in the season. The week of September 21 started at Indianapolis followed by Terre Haute. Illinois was reentered at Danville followed by Bloomington and Jacksonville where, what in later years would be normal for the larger Railroad shows but was now unusual enough to be remarked about, they had a two mile haul from the runs to the lot. The week ended crossing the Mississippi to Mark Twain's hometown, Hannibal, Mo. We wonder what Huckleberry Finn's comments would have been about this big show compared to the Dan Rice show with its Pete Jenkins act that made such an impression on him in the 1850s. In the following week they were in Ft. Scott, Kan., 30 where Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus had preceded them by two days. The following Sunday in Oklahoma City after the big top was erected the show turned it over to the Ministers Alliance and it was used for a monster religious revival meeting. The show wound up its 1914 tour October 12 in Dallas, Ft. Worth 14, and Wichita Falls 15.

1915

Again, as in 1914 Buffalo Bill was to be the star attraction of the show although there were rumbles of discontent on his part. Several new lithos featuring him had been prepared to advertise the show. As it turned out this was to be his last year with the show and his last year in show business. Although in July he announced that he would have his own wild west show in 1916 on 21 cars plus two in advance, with Louis

By 1915 this buffalo carving had been removed from a small parade tableau and mounted on this highly carved bandwagon. Pfening Collection.

E. Cooke as General Agent, this never came to pass.

Winterquarters were again busy with many of the older wagons being replaced or rebuilt. Cap Curtis was busy again this year coming up with a new mechanical stake driver and another three wheeled truck (tractor) for pulling the wagons. This year the menagerie top, in addition to the big top, was to have its spool wagon. It was planned to have a power take-off that would raise all the center poles simultaneously and the peaks simultaneously.

Original plans called for the show to open March 27 in Ft. Worth, Texas, but a hoof and mouth quarantine was placed in effect in mid-March and tentative plans were made to open again in Albuquerque on April 10. But these plans were also cancelled and finally arrangements were made to open in San Bernardino, Calif., Tuesday April 13, the latest opening for the show in some years.

San Bernardino was much farther from Denver than any of the other opening stands in prior years. The run was over 1356 miles of fairly desolate, mountainous and desert-like country. So on April 4 the train of 44 cars, 10 coaches, 20 flats, 11 stocks, two tank cars filled with water and a car of provisions for the animals, left Denver in two sections of 21 and 23 cars. The water and provision cars were rented from the railroad for that run only. It is believed that four stops were made enroute to water, feed and exercise the stock and animals as well as the personnel (a reported 460 and 650 respectively). A long run such as this could be a very tiring proposition for both man and beast in their cramped quarters. The two advance cars had, of course, left some five days or so earlier.

The advance cars, however, were in something of a bind. Original plans called for the show to be in San Francisco for one week, May 2-9. But just before the advance cars left Denver the show learned that the City Fathers of San Francisco would not let the show perform there while the Panama-Pacific Exposition was on (all that summer). The advance agents did much scurrying around and twisting of arms and finally the

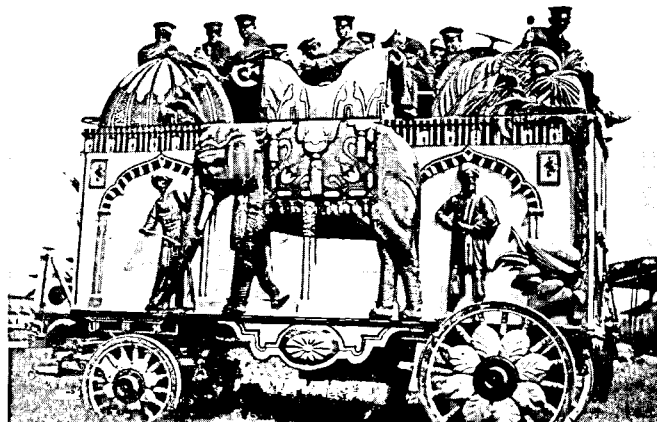
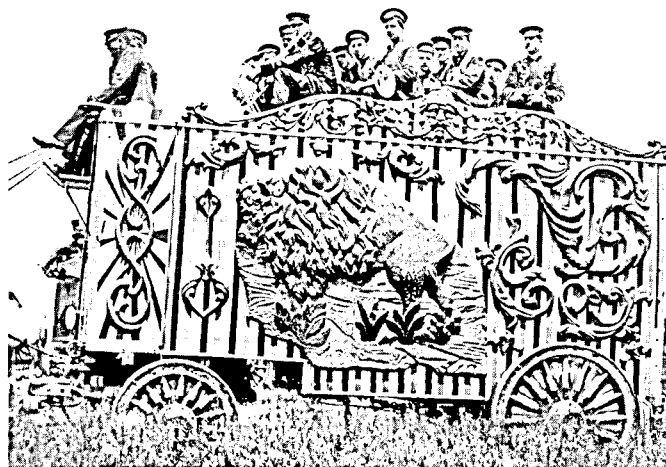
show learned just before leaving Denver that it had been issued a permit for May 2-6.

The opening in San Bernardino on Tuesday April 13 after several days of rehearsals brought praise from *The Billboard*. Opening day had rain at noon which held down the afternoon crowds, but the evening crowds were quite large. The performance was given in a slightly smaller big top, a four pole 160 foot round top with only three 50 foot middle pieces instead of the six poles used in 1914.

The performance was as follows;

- No 1—
Opening pageant followed by Rhoda Royal's newest garland and flag entry
- No 2—
Lucia Zora and mixed group of lions and tigers
- No 3—
The Nelsons, flying rings; Mons. Lowande, bounding rope; Ogawa Japs, posturing, oriental pastimes, contortions and barrel kicking; W.J. Langher, bounding rope; Totsu and Uni, Japanese feats on the hippodrome track
- No 4—
Col. W.F. (Buffalo Bill) Cody introduced
- No 5—
Elephants presented by Lucia Zora, Carrie Royal and Jess McKenzie
- No 6—
Omar, the original airship horse, ridden to the top of the tent by Flo Robinson, English Equestrienne
- No 7—
Statue horses introduced by Allen Brahm, Viola Donovan and Lucille King
- No 8—
Horace Webb and his famous airship assisted by the other clowns
- No 9—
Principal rider Estelle Hobson; Somersault rider Rosa Rosaline; Principal rider Irene Montgomery; Clowns on the track
- No 10—
Big ground and aerial number — Delno

The Sells-Floto Circus elephant tableau is pictured with the big show band up ready for a parade in 1915. Carver Collection.





The first section of the 1915 train is pictured here in a California photo. Pfening Collection.

**No 22—
Usual Hippodrome Races**

While the performance was perhaps not up to that of 1914 it was still an excellent well-rounded show with some of just about everything that goes to make up a good circus. As *The Billboard* reporter commented, it was just about summed up by a customer remarking on the way out of the tent "How can they do it for a quarter?"

The opening week wound up with two days in San Diego. The following week started with Los Angeles 19-20, the Long Beach, Pasadena and Santa Barbara. The third week was all one day stands at Bakersfield, Hanford, Fresno, Modesto, Stockton and San Jose. The fourth week started with a Sunday, May 2, in San Francisco followed by four more days. All five days gave excellent business. In spite of rain on three days they did capacity business at three shows and had two turnaways. It is interesting that up to then for the first 26 days of the season there had been 22 with rain. But in spite of the bad weather Harry Tammen

The show played the Oakland, California Auditorium for three days early in May of 1915. This photo was taken during the indoor stand. Pfening Collection.



- Sisters, double contortion; Joe LaFleur, back ladder drop; Contortion dog Buster; Will Lindeman, single trapeze; Ab Johnson and Georgie, balancing pole; Aerial Lafayettes, double trapeze; Frazier, flying perch; Pete Nelson, flying perch; Horace Webb, flying ladder
- No 11—**
High school horses ridden by Austin King, Mike Brahm, Flo Robinson, Lucille King, Irene Montgomery, Maude Johnson, Alice Brahm, Carrie Royal, Viola Donovan, Alden Potter and Don Darrah
- No 12—**
Clowns burlesque high school horses
- No 13—**
Howe, Barlow and Luckey sisters, iron jaw artistes; Two Lindemans, tight wire; Fred Biggs, wire act
- No 14—**
Homer Hobson, four horse act; Alex Lowande, somersault riding; Ab Johnson, four horse act; clowns on the track
- No 15—**
Luckey Sisters, iron jaw; Irene Montgomery, Millie Lindeman, Louise Nelson and Maude Johnson, flying ladders; Aerial Emery, upside down man
- No 16—**
Four black and four white liberty horses presented by Alden Potter and M. Brahm; Five trained hyneys presented by Austin King; Jack Harris and John Albion with the educated mule, Snowball, and Tom Darrah on the track with the trapeze pony, Eclipse.
- No 17—**
Revolving Tables
- No 18—**
Capt. Devlin's troupe of Zouaves
- No 19—**
Clowns with Jack Harris as Captain of the burlesque Zouaves
- No 20—**
The Delnos, aerial bars; Horace Webb, comedy ladder; aerial Lafayettes, comedy revolving ladder
- No 21—**
Performances by cowboys and cowgirls, Mexican vanqueros and Indians. Among the cowboys and cowgirls are Bill Saunders, Hugh Clark, Floyd Irwin, Pablo Martinez, Eloise Fox, Art Roden, Mike Hastings and Bob Lee

asserted that "the show is all right" and if the San Francisco business was an example it certainly must have been.

After San Francisco they finished the week with Santa Cruz and Berkeley. The fifth week opened May 9 at Richmond followed by Oakland 10-12. From there they worked their way north reaching Portland, Ore., 24-25 where they had three turnaways. Two days later in Aberdeen the merry-go-round broke down because of an overload. It was most unusual for a circus to carry a merry-go-round, but it had been done on rare occasions. This one required two wagons, one 14 feet long for the power plant and the other 30 feet long for the rest of the equipment. It apparently was easy to put up and take down for it was said to be always ready before the side shows. Within the first month it had one day in which it took in \$266. Considering that this was the equivalent of perhaps \$1000 today, this was a very good take with its relatively small overhead and expense. It was owned and operated by Charles Andress who had been around circuses in various advance and administrative jobs for many years.

After Aberdeen they were in Tacoma. They started the next week, Monday May 31, in Seattle for three days. The first day was a turnaway in the afternoon and capacity at night. The rest of the stay there was excellent. For the next week or so they



The Capt. Devlin Zouaves Troupe appeared as a band in the parade of the 1915 show. Pfening Collection.

mostly played in the smaller towns of Washington and Oregon with Pendleton and Baker City, June 11 and 12 winding up that part of the tour. Now they began to work eastward again. They were in Pocatello, Idaho, 15, Salt Lake City 17 and Ogden 18 followed by an afternoon only at Rock Springs, Wyo., 17 where they had high winds and only fair business. At Salt Lake City "Kid" McCoy joined as a concert feature. He "insists he can defend himself against anybody, if he had a revolver, meat axe or baseball bat".

From there on Sunday they made a 484 mile run into Denver where they were booked for Monday and Tuesday June 21-22. The first section of the train arrived at 2:30 p.m. and the second half hour later. As usual the show did excellent business in its hometown, capacity at both shows Monday and packed houses on Tuesday. Leaving Denver they began to move into the midwest going first to Boulder City, Greeley and Ft. Collins, then completing the week at Cheyenne, Wyo. The next week starting June 28 they spent in Nebraska at North Platte where after a 225 mile run in they had a big afternoon but were hurt by rain in the evening. The balance of the week was in Kearney, Columbus, York, Hastings and Fairbury. On July 5-6 they were in Kansas City, Mo.

The side shows during this period were both doing good business along with the merry-go-round. The side show featured



Mounted cowboy bands were featured in many circus parades of the period. This one was in the 1915 Sells-Floto parade. Pfening Collection.

Capt. Ricardo and five Nubian lions and Duke the untameable lion; Margaret Ricardo and troupe of Indian leopards (this couple certainly did more work on the show than any other performers); a troupe of monkeys and ponies; May LaBar, mind reader and fortune teller; and Bill Lawson, musical act. There was also a twelve piece band. This was really more of a small circus than a side show. Tom Moore managed it and had four ticket boxes outside. The pit show which was managed by Walter Olsen was more of a side show. There was a glass-blower; mind reader; Barry Nelson, armless wonder; Lalla Coolah, man-woman; Aztec Indian midgits and King Gillespie, the cigarette fiend.

After Kansas City they moved north to Omaha 8 and on into Minnesota at Faribault 13, Austin 14, followed by La Crosse, Wis., Grand Rapids and Wassau. By July 23 they were in Elgin, Ill., to be followed by Chicago 24-25 at the White City Park (a large amusement and picnic park). This was their first venture into the windy city and was greeted with considerable success. Harry Tammen came on from Denver and much was made of his and the shows visit there. While many of the performers, including Rhoda Royal and Lucia Zora were singled out for praise, for the first time the clowns received much attention. Although they did not have the top names that they had had the previous year, they did apparently keep the audience amused. *The Billboard*

On September 16, 1915 three of the Floto flat cars were derailed in Havensville, Kansas. Two days were lost in rebuilding following the wreck. Pfening Collection.



presented a full listing of all the acts which makes interesting reading.

The numbers were: — Bill Langlers pad dog; Horace Webb's elephant and big chain; Harry Bayfield's live bird shoot; Harry Bayfield's burlesque statues; Dr. Yankem's dentist office by Fred Henkel and others; Horace Webb's burlesque jockey walkaround; Harry Bayfield's tango queens. There were a number of other walkarounds consisting of Langher's rooster; Ernest White and Bill Albion's walking saloon; Fred Henkle's big fish; Harry Bayfield's X-ray gown; Art Monette's two face figure; the Demars and their crying baby and Carlton Emery with his made in America Charlie Chaplin. The visual nature of some of these is clear but others we can only guess at. Needless to say the clowns appeared to be busy for in addition to the foregoing there were several production numbers which were listed in the program. There were fifteen clowns listed by name which while not a large group was apparently adequate.

Except for a few stands in Michigan, Dowagiac 27, Battle Creek 28, Kalamazoo 29 and Benton Harbor 30 the show had reached its farthest point east of the Mississippi at Chicago. And now it again, well into the second half of the season, turned west. It played a few towns in Illinois and reached Iowa, Karl King's home state at Keokuk, August 8. Karl King in his second year as Bandmaster, interestingly, had as his assistant the former Leader, W.P. English. There were 26 men in the band; five cornets, four clarinets, one Eb clarinet, one flute, three altos, three trombones, two baritones, two bases, two drums and one air caliope plus King and English. But King was not well received in his state for the next day at Ft. Madison they had heavy rain in the afternoon and the entire show had to be gillied off the lot.

They entered Missouri at Kirksville August 12 and played there through August 27, mostly in small towns. At Jefferson 18 they had a long haul to the lot, a late parade and only fair business but the next day at Marshall both houses were packed.



They ended the tour of Missouri at Springfield 26 and Carthage 27. Entering Oklahoma the next day at Vinita followed by Muskogee 30. Then came almost three weeks in Kansas starting at Parsons 31 and including in September, Laurence 3, Wichita 6, Dodge City 9, Sedalia 13, Manhattan 14 and Clay Center 15.

Enroute from Clay Center to Holton between Onaga and Havensville, Kans., on the Mo-Pac R.R. three of the 60 foot flats carrying ten baggage wagons left the rails with considerable damage to both the cars and wagons. One of the wagons ditched was the big top canvas spool wagon and nearly all the canvas rolled out. Because of the wreck both Holton and Kansas City, the next two dates, were lost. The route

This unusual three wheeled tractor was called "One Eyed John" by the working men on the Floto show. This is a 1915 photo. Pfening Collection.

was picked up again at Independence, Mo. 18.

After Ft. Scott 20 and Independence 21 in Kansas they were back in Oklahoma at Ponca 22 where they stayed through October 1 at Elk City where they played an afternoon only date to very large crowds.

The next day at Amarillo, Tex., they were strawed "although all the seats were up" in the afternoon and were big in the evening. The "all seats were up" is an unusual statement but apparently it was the practice on many shows to make a judgment, based on the size of the town, past

experience and other factors as to the number of seats that might be required and put up only that many. The following dates were in New Mexico, Rosewell 4 and Clovis 5. Then they went back to Texas at Lubbock where it was reported that the entire population of the county, 6,000, attended the show. The remainder of the season was played in Texas, mostly small towns except for San Angelo 9, Ft. Worth 18, Corpus Christi 30, San Antonio, November 3, El Paso 6 except the final date of the season, Albuquerque, N.M., 8.

No news of the results of the 1915 season appeared in any of the show journals but from the notes throughout the season, we must assume that it was successful. And as plans for 1916 began to unfold it became apparent that Sells-Floto was continuing to have expectation for continuing good business.

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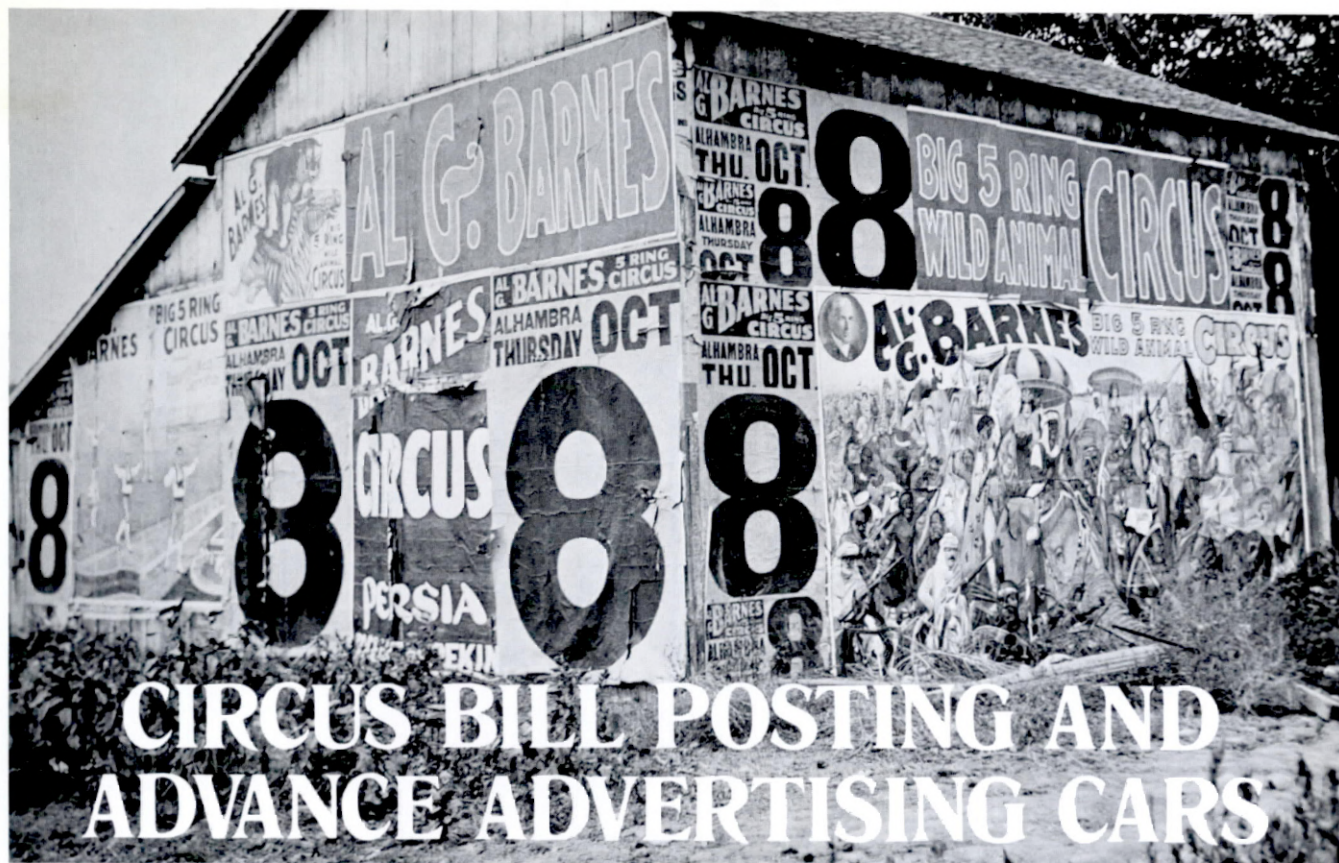
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By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

OPPOSITION AND BILLING WARS PART THREE

John J. Brassil was named manager of the Ringling-Barnum advance car in 1948 and he remained in that position until the show closed under canvas in 1956. Brassil was well organized and very businesslike in his management of the car and crew. He maintained a looseleaf binder that contained typed lithograph routes for all of the major cities in which the big show exhibited. These books are now part of the collection of the Circus World Museum. In checking these books we found the 1942 book listed 9 walking lithograph and one truck route in Columbus, Ohio. Special notes on each route called attention to certain good locations and the amount of paper it would take.

The checker-up or inspector followed these routes later and with the use of the lithographers report made sure the paper was "living."

A car manager on a truck show during this period was well known for his aggressiveness in filling an "empty." This man carried a large ring of "skeleton" keys which enabled him to "strong-arm" any likely empty store room, with out the formality of contacting the owner and securing the keys and permission to make use of the windows.

After entering the building and fully loading the windows with pictorial and date work, he would fill out the proper number of passes and thumb tack the passes to the

inside wall along with a note stating that he felt sure that the building owner intended to allow the show to use his property, and thanked him.

The "fast-stepping main street lithographers" and "aggressive and active bill posters" which were constantly being advertised for in the *Billboard*, had other attributes and talents that allowed them to place the advertising of the circus ahead of their own health in some cases. These talents came into play when more than one show was scheduled to play the same city, and each desired the best billing locations.

In a good hot circus billing war some bill posting daubs would be covered and recovered four and five times by the two shows.

One such battle took place in Elmira, New York, in 1926, where the Sells-Floto Circus played on June 25 and the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West on June 30. Art "Doc" Miller, a bill poster of renown, was working at the Eldridge Park in Elmira at the time.

He relates the following account of this famous confrontation.

"No sooner did the Ranch banner crew tack their beautiful cowboy and indian muslin banners than the Floto opposition crew, in the dead of night, take long pump rods, with a sharp point at the end and riddled the banners. Replaced the following day by the 101 boys, they climbed to the roof of that building and awaited the enemy. When the Floto crew returned and commenced to rig their rods, the 101 men ripped bricks from the parapet wall and

This is a wonderful example of a country daub, using large dates, title streamers and 24 sheet pictorial. It was posted by the Al G. Barnes Circus in 1931. Circus World Museum Collection.

heaved these at the offending opposition. They in return dodged the cruel bricks and heaved them back up on the higher roof. I have no idea what injuries were caused but the lower roof was completely ruined and the next rain caused thousands of dollars worth of damage to the walls, ceiling, to say nothing of ruining the entire stock of a ladies apparel shop, a show store and the only news stand in town. The banker later told me they received ten duckets worth a buck apiece and the new roof alone cost \$5,000, forgetting damage to the stores themselves. This explains why each year, many good daub locations were lost."

"The banner location was not the only contact between the Ranch and Floto show, during the 1926 Elmira opposition. Upon contacting the farmer, he sadly shook his head no and related how they used to raise geese for their Christmas family presents. They let some billers cover the barn and the next day all of their geese were laying dead. After sending one to the state lab they learned the geese had gobbled up the excess paste which had run between the boards to the inside wall. The paste which had been cooked per custom, with lye."

A number of years prior to these battles of the 1920s there was a running battle between the Campbell Bros. Great Consolidated Shows, of Fairbury, Nebraska



and the Gollmar Bros. Greatest of American Shows, of Baraboo, Wisconsin.

The Campbell show in the early 1900s had two cars on the advance. The No. 1 Car, managed by George Allen, carried 20 men and traveled two weeks ahead of the show. Often the Campbell route was contracted shortly ahead of the show and a printing press was carried on the car to print dates. The press would handle only a half sheet so it was necessary to print one half at a time in making up one sheets. A brigade would follow posting larger dates, after time had allowed regular dates from the poster printer.

The No. 2 Car, managed by Emery Proffit, carried 14 to 16 men, and was one week ahead of the show. The No. 2 car posted larger dates and rebilled the stands washed out by rains.

A member of the crew of the No. 1 Car, Frank "Doc" Stuart, relates that the Campbell crew were always ready for "eats, drinks or fights." Whichever came first of these the Campbell crew could not be surpassed. It did not matter to them what show provided opposition, the big and the small, they would take them all on during the late summer and fall throughout the Northwest.

The special enemy of the Campbell show was Gollmar circus. When Campbell was on 20 cars, Gollmar was also. The Nebraska show went to 25 cars and the Wisconsin show enlarged five cars also. They both

The Miller & Arlington 101 Ranch show posted on top of live paper of the Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch Wild West Show during the 1913 season. The Carson show was billed for Au Sable Forks, N.Y., on July 22 and the larger Ranch show was coming into Plattsburg, N.Y. on July 30. Harold Dunn Collection.

finally went to 30 cars. But Campbell carried 11 elephants and Gollmar carried eight or nine, and with elephants counting in those days the Campbell show always figured they were the larger circus.

As press agent of the Campbell show Frank Stuart did his best to "Big-up the Campbell show and belittle the Gollmar Bros." One summer during early August the Campbell show was "just crusin' along like a big whale through Minnesota, a-bringin' a musement, enlightenment and entertainment to the rural citizens of the Gopher State. They had just finished "postin' art and culture on the barns and out houses for 25 miles out of Fergus Falls," when William J. Gilman, contracting agent for the show boarded the No. 1 Car. He immediately came to the office and reported:

"I just left the Old Man (Al Campbell) and he says to pass up Barnesville and jump

The Campbell Bros. Great Consolidated Shows No. 1 advertising car is shown here with its crew in Atlantic, Iowa, in 1909.



ahead directly from here to Breckenridge and bill hell out of it. The Gollmar show car is moving by wire (telegraphic orders) and is getting into our territory. Keep your eyes peeled for opposition and give 'em both barrels when you meet 'em."

Tobe Beers the boss billposter was then called into conference. Beers was a man of small stature but a real fighter of some 30 years experience. This news was like a magic tonic to Beers. He had been moping around for a month because he had spent his earnings freely and he wondered just how he was going to winter on a slim bank account. Beers eyes snapped, a fighting flush came to his cheeks and when Gilman told him that he would receive an extra week's salary for doing a good job of billing in and around Breckenridge he became a new man.

Gilman said he felt they were heading for Hankinson, N.D., and that is only about 15 miles from Lidgerwood, our next stand out of Breckenridge. The Campbell car had been serenely cruising along but knew opposition was bound to pop any time after the wheat harvest. Charlie Manners a big bill poster related his experience in Nebraska the prior fall when a member of the Gollmar crew had busted his head. He remembered he couldn't get at him with his brass knucks, but said he was going to take a club along this time. That night the crew bolstered their courage at a local bar and then had returned to the car on a station siding. The car had been attached to a passenger train and was about to move out, when they felt a slight bump on the coupler of the advance car. They stepped out on the platform and found lo and behold, there was the No. 1 Car of the Gollmar show attached to them.

The battle lines were drawn on the spot. The two car managers adjourned to George Allen's office to talk it over.

After the men were seated the debate began and it was agreed that the Campbell crews would bill 7½ miles toward Hankinson and the Gollmar crews would do the same towards Lidgerwood. Later in the night the Gollmar car was dropped at Hankinson and the Campbell car went on to Lidgerwood.

Stuart was pressed into service with a hod of lithographs and told to plaster every window in the village. In this case the agreement must have saved a battle royal as Stuart reported nothing further on the opposition at the two stands.

The Campbell circus had opposition with the Ringling Bros. in the Dakotas for a few seasons just before the turn of the century. The fight became so intense that in 1898 the Ringlings leased the John Robinson Circus on 22 cars and sent it out on a route through the Campbell territory and went out to drive the Fairbury show from its coveted route. The Ringling organization posted three sheets on each stand that carried the route of the Robinson show for one week and also said in large type "We Do Not Change Our Route For Any Circus." This special three-sheet was independent of regular dates for the stand. William H. Horton was the Robinson car manager that season and later became manager of all

billing for the Ringling, the Barnum and the Forepaugh-Sells shows operated by the Ringling organization. Henry Ringling was manager of the Robinson show. The 1898 season was the only year that the Ringlings used the Robinson title.

In our files we have correspondence from William H. Horton to the Strobridge Lithograph Co. concerning the 1911 season's paper order for the Ringling Bros. the Barnum & Bailey and the Forepaugh-Sells shows. Each circus used three advance cars. The following is a list of the paper ordered out for each of the three circuses:

Baraboo, Wis., Feb. 13, 1911
Strobridge Litho. Co.
Cincinnati, O.

Gentlemen:-

We have boxed and ready for shipment as soon as the weather opens up so we can get it from the car shops to the depot, three boxes of Forepaugh & Sells Bros., season 1910. Contents as follows:

60	28-sheet	Parade	1680 shts.
77	20-sheet	Horse Act	1540 shts.
77	20-sheet	Elephants	1540 shts.
44	16-sheet	Riders	704 shts.
63	12-sheet	Alpine Wire	756 shts.

72	12-sheet	Hanley	864 shts.
63	8-sheet	Edwards	504 shts.
63	8-sheet	Butterflies	504 shts.
72	8-sheet	Seals	576 shts.
76	6-sheet	Portraits	456 shts.
73	3-sheet	Portraits	219 shts.
55	3-sheet	Rhino	165 shts.
			9508 shts.

The above with those you have on hand from last season we will want to use on Car No. 1; all of which will run one per day for 170 days, except the 28 Sheet, which will run two per day for the season. You will please include this old paper in regular Car No. 1 list.

To avoid any possible mistake in billing of this printing would you think well of giving us credit for the same, and then charge to us in the regular way when shipments are made? Please advise if this plan is satisfactory to you.

As there might be some mistake in the count of the paper shipped to you, it would probably be well to wait until you receive the paper before giving us credit, in case you approve of this manner of handling the transaction.

Wish you would go over each of the lists, and advise if they are O.K.

Yours truly,
W.H. Horton

STROBRIDGE LITHOGRAPH COMPANY

Lay-out for RINGLING BROS. Printing

SEASON 1911.

			Car 1	Car 2	Car 3
2000	32-sheet	Street Parade	5	3	2
3000	28-sheet	Portrait & Title	9	5	2
2000	24-sheet	General Animals	5	3	2
2000	20-sheet	Clowns	5	3	2
3000	20-sheet	Elephants	9	5	2
3000	20-sheet	Schuman Horses	9	5	2
3000	20-sheet	Acrobats	9	5	2
3000	16-sheet	Parkers Riders	10	3	3
2000	16-sheet	Chariot	5	3	2
6000	16-sheet	Portraits	16	11	5
3000	16-sheet	Loyal	11	3	2
3000	16-sheet	Delno	9	5	2
3000	12-sheet	Alex Troupe	8	5	3
3000	8-sheet	Baby Elephant	11	3	2
3000	8-sheet	Mijares Wire	11	3	2
3000	8-sheet	Giraffes	8	5	3
3000	6-sheet	Comedy Horse Act	8	5	3
2000	6-sheet	Hippo	5	3	2
6000	3-sheet	Portraits	20	9	3
3000	3-sheet	Miss Clark	8	5	3
2000	3-sheet	Rhino	5	3	2
5000	1-sheet	Parade	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	General Animals	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Schuman Horses	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Portraits	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Rhino & Hippo	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Giraffe	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Loyal	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Miss Clark	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Elephants	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Clowns	24	—	4
5000	½-sheet	Baby Elephant	24	—	4
5000	½-sheet	Portraits	24	—	4

The above wall work runs for 180 days for Cars 1, 2 and 3.

List 4 for 40 days only.

The above window work runs 180 days for car one and 170 days for Car 3.

STROBRIDGE LITHOGRAPH COMPANY

Lay-out for BARNUM & BAILEY Printing

SEASON 1911.

			Car 1	Car 2	Car 3
2000	32-sheet	Parade	6	3	3
2000	28-sheet	Portrait & Title	7	5	3
2000	24-sheet	General Animals	6	3	3
3000	20-sheet	Horses	9	5	3
2000	20-sheet	Clowns	6	3	3
3000	20-sheet	Musical Elephants	9	5	3

60 copies	28-sheet	Features
77 copies	20-sheet	Horse Act
77 copies	20-sheet	Elephants
44 copies	16-sheet	Riders
63 copies	12-sheet	Alpine Wire
72 copies	12-sheet	Hanleys
63 copies	8-sheet	Edwards
63 copies	8-sheet	Butterflies
72 copies	8-sheet	Seals
76 copies	6-sheet	Portraits
73 copies	3-sheet	Portraits
55 copies	3-sheet	Rhino



The Ringling-Barnum show contracted good daubs to be held from opposition shows far in advance of the show date. This is an example of the sign they used to ward off other shows using the posting space. This photo was taken in 1938.

We will freight from Baraboo to your establishment at Cincinnati the following bills from season 1910.

These together with those you have on hand from last season we will want to use on Car No. 1. All of which will run 1 per day for 170 days, except the 28 sheet Features, which will run 2 per day for the season. You will please include this old paper in the regular Car No. 1 List.

Frederick A. (Babe) Boudinot, of Chicago, Illinois, joined the Hagenbeck-Wallace bill car at the age of 16 in 1912 and retired in 1954 as general agent of the Ringling-Barnum show. As he worked his way up to the top position of the advance he participated in a number of billing donnybrooks.

Boudinot began as "student" on the Hagenbeck car at \$30.00 per month with a \$5.00 hold back. He remained with Hagenbeck-Wallace through the 1914 season and then moved to the Ringling Bros. in the spring of 1915, where he remained until the combination with the Barnum show and then continued with "big berth."

As a bill poster Babe always worked with the opposition brigade. His job was to get his show's paper up, keep it up, and keep the opposition's bills out of sight. He received many lumps in carrying out this action.

One little conflict that Boudinot remembers happened on a Sunday in May of 1921, when the John Robinson show was getting set for a stand at Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Babe and his brigade were touring the countryside by car, covering Robinson paper, when they noticed that they were being followed by another auto. Driving into Wilkes-Barre proper, he and his crew stopped at one of the main streets and stepped out of their car. The other car pulled up and Jerry Mugivan, one of the owners of the John Robinson show, together with a couple of his huskies, confronted Babe and his men. Babe called for a jack handle after eyeing the situation, but two of the Robinson "boys" pinned his feet and legs, while several of the others gave him a real going over.

He had had a run-in with the Mugivan crowd his first year after joining Ringling.

The John Robinson Circus covered Walter L. Main paper at this stand in Kentucky in September of 1928. As was usually the case the pictorials were left and title streamers were posted over the opposition title. All illustrations from the author's collection unless otherwise credited.



3000	20-sheet	Seals	9	5	3
2000	16-sheet	Chariot Race	6	3	3
3000	16-sheet	Portraits	9	5	3
3000	16-sheet	Berzac	9	5	3
3000	16-sheet	Konyote	9	5	3
3000	16-sheet	Les Dekoes	9	5	3
3000	12-sheet	Balloon Horse	9	5	3
3000	12-sheet	Seigrist-Silbon	9	5	3
3000	8-sheet	Giraffes	9	5	3
3000	8-sheet	Charles 1st	9	5	3
3000	8-sheet	Bento Bros.	9	5	3
2000	6-sheet	Hippo	6	3	3
3000	6-sheet	Victoria Codona	9	5	3
3000	3-sheet	Portraits	9	5	3
2000	3-sheet	Rhino	6	3	3
5000	1-sheet	Charles 1st	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Parade	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	General Animals	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Seals	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Portraits	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Berzac	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Konyots	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Balloon Horse	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Giraffes	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Rhino	24	—	4
5000	1-sheet	Horses	24	—	4
5000	1/2-sheet	Musical Elephants	24	—	4
5000	1/2-sheet	Portraits	24	—	4

The above wall work runs for 160 days for Cars 1, 2 and 3

List 4 for 40 days only

The above window work runs 180 days for Car 1 and 170 days for Car 3

The extra run of 3000 16-sheet and 3000 3-sheet Portraits are not included in the above, and will be ordered out as needed for special use.

Boudinot and his brigade blew into Fall City, Nebraska, on the Hagenbeck-Wallace show date, and proceeded to make the parade route programming (distributing) Ringling heralds attempting to lure the towners to their show. The opposition forces got wise and roughed up Babe and his men.

This problem was solved on future occasions by hiring Boy Scouts to pass out the handbills. He used this tactic during the rest of the H-W, Nebraska route.

Another scheme he used during the Hagenbeck clash was to bill towns along the opposition route with Ringling paper three months in advance, even though his show had no intention of playing the dates. But many people preferred to wait for the Ringling show and not knowing any better skipped the Hagenbeck performance.

The last really big billing war that he participated in occurred in Great Ben, Kansas, in 1936, when he did battle with

Cole Bros. Babe and a seven man brigade were laboring to cover the Cole paper, when Jess Adkins and Floyd King, owner and general agent of the Cole circus, met Babe on the street. Adkins and King pointed Boudinot out to several bruisers from their show and a real free-for-all ensued, the outcome being a trip to the hospital for Babe, but he was on his way the next day.

Although his early days may have seemed like an endless series of black and blue marks, he recalls that old time bill posters would battle each other during the day and then gather in a local tavern for a series of friendly jack-pots at night.

In this example of covering paper, the smaller show, Eddy Bros. (Owned by Charlie Hunt) placed a title streamer over the larger Robbins Bros. title, but not bothering to cover all of the Robbins name. It is doubtful that the Robbins paper was live at the time. Taken in 1938.



STROBRIDGE LITHOGRAPH COMPANY
Lay-out for FOREPAUGH & SELLS BROS. Printing
SEASON 1911.

			Car 1	Car 2	Car 3
2000	32-sheet	Parade	6	3	2
2000	24-sheet	General Animals	5	4	2
2000	20-sheet	Clowns	5	4	2
3000	20-sheet	Elephants	8	5	3
3000	16-sheet	Double Auto	8	5	3
2000	16-sheet	Chariot	4	4	3
3000	8-sheet	Seals	8	5	3
3000	8-sheet	Butterflies	8	5	3
2000	6-sheet	Hippo	4	4	3
2000	3-sheet	Rhino	4	4	3
5000	1-sheet	Auto Double	29 Per day 170 days		
5000	1-sheet	Parade	35	—	5
5000	1-sheet	Rhino	35	—	5
5000	1-sheet	Elephants	35	—	5
5000	1-sheet	Portraits	35	—	5
5000	1-sheet	Seals	35	—	5
5000	1-sheet	Butterflies	35	—	5
5000	½-sheet	Chariot	35	—	5
5000	½-sheet	Clowns	35	—	5

The above wall work runs 170 days for cars 1, 2 and 3

List 4 runs for 30 days only

Window work for cars 1 and 3 runs 125 days except the 1-sheet Auto Double, which runs for 170 days for car 1 only; non for car 3.

There will be 10 copies of each bill left over after allowing for the above, which will be used as desired; that is 10 copies of wall work only

The year of 1936 was when he acquired his first big opposition brigade, but by 1950, although traffic manager and assistant general agent, he still directed a large brigade for original bill posting, another to repair bills and catch spots missed by the first group, a third to tack up cloth banners, an inspector to check on work done, and a crew to pull the costly banners for reuse.

In our collection we have a group of letters regarding a series of scraps between Babe and his Ringling-Barnum crew and the Cole Bros. Circus in 1941.

The first letter, dated October 18, 1941, Paris, Texas, from Lee S. Conarroe, of the Cole brigade, to Jake D. Newman, Cole's general agent. We quote:

"I wish to correct an impression evidently left or created by the Ringling-Barnum Circus, that we have so grossly violated all decent order of competitive billing.

I was witness to the billing difficulties and arguments in Goose Creek and upon leaving the advance car with one man to check back over our towns and into Ruston I found that we not only had been

Frederick A. "Babe" Boudinot, "King of the opposition brigades" is shown here on the right in the advance car he managed for the Ringling-Barnum Circus in 1944. With him on the left is Tom Connors, an old time bill poster.



completely sold down the river in Ruston and territory but that Ringling men had returned to Goose Creek, Pelly, LaPort and Port Arthur and had once again billed over us for Galveston October 8, which billing had been done the night of October 7. I, naturally, took back (recovered with Cole paper) what I could of it and dated the rest as far as our dates went.

They had sloughed us on the country routes out of Port Arthur and Lake Charles and also in Lake Charles proper which I took back as the paper was then dead. On my arrival in Ruston I found no evidence of Cole Bros. circus billing other than banners, and as they had no town name one could not know where the circus was to be. All lithographs had been pulled and Ringling Bros. substituted, as they told the public that Cole Bros. was one of the smaller Ringling Shows and the Agent had made a mistake in coming so close to the BIG SHOW and that we were making Lake Charles in place of Ruston and would return at a later date and replace the billing. Within one hour along would come a Ringling biller and lithographer the hit for Monroe. The first man who removed the billing, however, represented himself as a Cole Bros. man. The druggist who had the advance seat sale had been so thoroughly sold with this idea that he tore up his ticket order and was highly indignant when corrected on the matter. We had one daub left in the town and they had substituted a MONROE township for Ruston.

We had no paper on any route out of Houston left so I began to check the routes and take back our daubs but soon discovered that we were being tailed by two station wagons and four men and they were taking back all that I could accomplish, so I resorted to the use of townslips reading only Ruston and townslipped their dates, but there were too many of them racing up and down the highways after me, so I layed for them one morning out on the Monroe highway and hid and after they had passed going to Ruston to obliterate my billing behind me I went into West Monroe in broad daylight and townslipped their billing which they would not have discovered had it not been for some nosey native calling up Gardiner Wilson who immediately wired Hopper, thence Boudinot, and back to the billers as this was told to me by one of them who is a personal friend of mine.

Mr. Newman, I have no apologies to offer for my actions in that billing war as they had us on the ropes for a week before I knew it and I took it upon myself to beat them at what they were doing to us and that we did. They started the whole thing and finally got in a spot where they yelled "copper" as we finished it up."

Vern A. Williams, the Cole advance car manager also wrote to Newman on the situation as follows:

"I am positive that no member of this car covered a live sheet of Ringling paper, they had strict orders not to, and the Ringling men watching them reported this to me that none of their paper had been molested at Ruston, Lake Charles and Port



Circus bill posters were most resourceful in finding daubs. This Mighty Haag stand shows how far a good man will go to post paper. This stand appeared in New Lexington, Ohio in May of 1912. Harold Dunn Collection.

Arthur. At Goose Creek we covered some Ringling daubs as we considered the paper dead as it was the second day that the show was on the lot in Houston and the Ringling banner puller had taken the banners down, however the Ringling men objected and covered the daubs back. Mr. (Bernie) Head, the agent for Ringling, thought it was okay for us to cover the paper the last day the show was in Houston, but evidently the billposters had different ideas.

The day I was billing Lake Charles, which was Friday, October 3, Boudinot was sending his billers out of New Orleans to cover all our paper towards Gulfport and ordered them to leave nothing of ours up, LaRue Deitz, one of Boudinot's men imparted that information. Boudinot then went to Baton Rouge and covered and pulled all of our Hammond billing, then moved to Alexandria and covered and pulled all of our Natchez billing on the Louisiana side of the river and absolutely cleaned us at Ruston, took everything down, told everybody that he was a representative of Cole Bros. and told the merchants that the show had cancelled Ruston and that he was removing the billing, about an hour later a Ringling biller appeared and took all

of our space. They even cancelled the downtown ticket sale.

These Ringling billers had orders to take us, not leave us a sheet if possible. I would not start to figure why such orders were given, but it surely wasn't given because we had molested any of their billing at any time. I would have been crazy to have covered any of their paper knowing that we are not equipped to fight them with about half the number of men and trucks that they have."

Then on October 19, 1941 Zack Terrell, owner of the Cole show, wrote to John Ringling North as follows:

"Enclosed are two more letters pertaining to the billing controversy.

I have investigated the information you gave me. I am surprised that Mr. (Arthur) Hopper would allow this fellow Boudinot to destroy our advertising. Possibly there is a little score to be settled between Mr. Boudinot and the Cole Bros. Circus. I feel sure that you were truthful about the matter, and in view of the facts, I think you should do something about it. I am in hopes it does not occur again, because I think a great deal of you two gentlemen."

This traffic banner stand was tacked by the opposition brigade of the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West for the Philadelphia stand in 1930. Following show day the banner pullers would return and remove all cloth banners from buildings to be used again.



The closing stand of the bill car often prompted the crew to make a special design, by cutting up dates and other paper to get the proper lettering for a final stand daub. This one posted by the crew of the No. 2 car of the Downie & Wheeler Shows polished off the 1912 season.

Henry Ringling North then wrote to Arthur Hopper who in turn sent the letter on to John Brassil the Ringling car manager, who in turn added the following note at the bottom of the letter:

John Brassil: Write me a letter concerning your part at Ruston, have the billers, who billed Ruston, write you a letter. Send this letter to Boudinot and his men, so all can write the truth with details as occurred."

Henry North answered Zack Terrell as follows: "I will bring the whole matter to the attention of Arthur Hopper when next I see him. It looks to me as though the boys must have caught the fever from the war maneuvers down Louisiana way.

Hope you are continuing to do good business."

The Ringling side of the story is revealed in a letter John J. Brassil wrote to Arthur Hopper dated November 5, 1941. He said:

"Boiled down to cold facts herewith follows exactly what happened at Ruston, Louisiana. We billed Ruston one day ahead of Cole Bros. advertising car, and our men heard at the time that Vern Williams and crew were due the next day. Our men posted five daubs and hung 54 sheets of lithographs in Ruston for our Monroe date as it was one of our principal feeders.

The next day when our car was billing Eldorado, Arkansas, I sent three men back to check and protect our billing in Ruston. Our men saw Vern Williams, the car manager with one of his lithographers named Kilpatrick taking down our lithographs under his personal supervision. They took down every lithograph in Ruston except one location which Williams, himself personally tried to have pulled. Not only did they take our lithographs down in Ruston but also on the country routes that we billed out of Monroe towards Ruston.

There was no necessity for bothering our paper in Ruston, and I merely sent men



back to protect our billing, which they did. Last season as you will remember one of my men Phil Isenberg covered Cole Bros. paper on a country route out of Columbus, Ohio, and he was discharged. We would not have bothered any Cole Bros. paper if they had not taken our lithographs down in Ruston and country routes. They thought they would get away with it but were caught red-handed to their surprise. These are the true facts of what happened at Ruston."

Five members of the Ringling advance car number 2 (brigade) also reported to Hopper as follows:

"We left New Orleans on October 3 to protect the Ringling-Barnum billing in Houston, Beaumont, and Galveston, Texas and Lake Charles, and Hammond, Louisiana and Natchez, Mississippi. Upon our arrival at Beaumont we caught the Cole Bros. billers covering our R.B. B & B paper and we protected according to instructions to take our paper back and also to erase them completely. This we must have done according to Mr. Newman's, Williams and Conarroe's beef. On the morning of October 6 in Goose Creek we found Mr. Vern A. Williams guarding a location which the Cole billers had recently covered Ringling paper, and he threatened to come to blows if we covered our paper back, and he also made some uncomplimentary remarks about the personnel of our show. We held our paper until our show was out of Houston. From there we were dispatched to Monroe, Louisiana, and on Friday October 10 we found that none of our paper had been molested. The following day when we went out on the routes towards Ruston we found where Cole billers had been slipping our dates to read RUSTON OCTOBER 15. We immediately took the daubs back with the proper dates for our exhibition at Monroe, and continued to do so until October 15, our date at Monroe.

In regards to Mr. Conarroe's statement about our dates in Monroe reading RUSTON living for several days he was badly mistaken as they only lived a few hours. His statement that we hollered copper is entirely wrong, as we had no occasion to do so. All billing in their stand of Ruston and surrounding country, with

The Lucky Bill-Honest Bill Shows traveled by truck and wagon during the 1922 season. This was the advance car used by the show. Harold Dunn Collection.



Double billboards were common in the 1920s. These would usually be posted by the local billboard company on contract from the show. The advance cars would sometimes rent the space and post it themselves.

the exception of a few lithos and banners in Ruston read Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey for Monroe and continued to read so until 5 a.m. October 15."

Although this correspondence is a bit long it gives insight into the formal gentlemanly-like comments between show owners as opposed to actual goings on of their bill crews. Strangely enough no one asked Babe Boudinot for his version of the 1941 Ringling-Cole battle.

By 1950 Babe Boudinot, as Assistant General Agent and Traffic Manager for Ringling-Barnum, was still calling the shots on handling the opposition. In our files is a copy of an interoffice memo dated September 5, 1950, from Boudinot to Nat Green, Manager of the Ringling Chicago office. In this letter he asks that following be ordered for the Goldsboro, N.C., date and shipped to Lee S. Conarroe, now with Ringling, manager of Car Three (the brigade), c/o The Hotel Goldsboro, Goldsboro, North Carolina: 30 Nine street cloth Banner dates, 250 one sheet upright dates, 250 half sheet upright dates and 250 half sheet flat dates all to read "COMING Goldsboro-Afternoon & Night, FRI. Nov. 3." The Clyde Beatty Circus was scheduled to show Goldsboro on September 18, nearly two months ahead of Ringling, but Ringling got their licks in by requesting the circus patrons to wait for the big show. According to the 1950 Ringling Barnum route book

Conarroe had five men with him on the brigade that season.

A letter in the files of the Circus World Museum is another example of comments between show owners. This one dated September 27, 1927 was written to Jerry Mugivan by Charles Sparks. Mr. Sparks commented as follows: "My Dear Mr. Mugivan. Sells-Floto covered everything in the country out of Columbus, Georgia. The car billed there Saturday the twenty-fourth, our date was Monday the twenty-sixth, Ballenger and myself rode the routes. I don't think you sanction this. I had a fine chance to cover Floto at Birmingham and Pensacola, but I will not do it. We have had opposition all fall with Robinson and so far as I know they nor, we did not touch a sheet.

Please write me regarding Floto covering at Columbus."

Unfortunately we do not have a copy of Jerry Mugivan's reply to Charlie Sparks, but feel sure it was only some pleasant acknowledgement.

The South became populated with circuses each fall as all of the shows tried to get the cotton money and beat the weather. The September 3, 1921 issue of the Billboard gives the picture in the South that season.

"After a complete tour of Virginia, the Great Sanger Circus began its Southern tour at Madison, N.C. Taken as a whole, business in Virginia was very good. The last stand in

In this photo opposition between two small truck circuses is shown. The Silvan-Drew bill poster has just covered 1929 Hunt paper, but was kind enough to leave a few dates remaining. Howard Tibbals Collection.





The truck shows of the early 1930s posted large stands of paper. This Seils-Sterling daub was posted during the 1933 season. Circus World Museum Collection.

Virginia being an opposition stand with Gentry Bros. Circus.

The Old North State this season is well represented with circuses. Clashes among brigades are in evidence every day. The John Robinson brigade has everything in sight covered with the warning that John Robinson is the only "big show" coming. In Asheville there was not space enough for a one sheet left open. Here the first real battle came between the Gentry Bros., Walter L. Main and John Robinson. Gentry came first, and business was capacity at both performances, now withstanding that the other two shows were against them. At High Point another real battle was staged between the same three shows. Taken as a whole battles have been fought on clean-cut principles. It has been clean opposition on every hand.

The Gentry Bros. and Great Sanger clashed at Newport, Tenn. Sanger made the town August 27 and Gentry will be there September 10. L.B. Greenhaw, general agent for the Sanger Circus, rushed in with a brigade and took everything in sight. R.W. Thompson, of the Gentry show arrived a little later, and the battle was on. Here is another example that opposition can be carried on in a legitimate manner, for the fight was clean from start to finish. Credit must be given both Mr. Greenhaw and Mr. Thompson for the strict discipline held over their men.

North Carolina, according to all reports, will be the only Southern State that will be made by the larger circuses this fall. Howe's Great London, Sparks and Cole Bros. are on their way down here."

The December 10, 1921 issue of the *Billboard* carried an article titled "Leading Circuses Agree Not To Cover Paper." It read as follows:

"Chicago, Dec. 2. Pursuant to an agreement reached yesterday at a meeting of the International Alliance of Billposters and Billers and the managers and general agents of practically all of the circuses, what has long been a sore spot on the back of the outdoor show world bids fair to have been removed.

John Jilson, union president, stated to The *Billboard* that the wage scale for the coming season, which was one of the most important subjects to come up, had been

settled as follows: Salary, \$90 a month; 75 cents for meals and \$1.50 for lodging. This, Mr. Jilson said, was the same scale and terms as last year.

George Moyer, speaking for the circus men, amplified the above statement as follows:

"A Gentlemen's agreement has been entered into between the general agents of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, the Seils-Floto Circus-Buffalo Bill's Wild West, the Hagenbeck-Wallace shows, John Robinson's Circus, Howe's Great London and Van Amberg Trained Wild Animal Shows, The Walter L. Main Shows, the Yankee Robinson Shows, Sparks World's Famous Circus, the Rohda Royal Circus and the Al. G. Barnes Circus, to the effect that there will be no covering of paper by any of the above shows and that the agreement will be religiously carried out.

Mr. Jilson had agreed with the circus agents and that the attention of all union billposters will be called to the fact that it is a violation of the now existing billposters laws for one union billposter or biller to cover up or deface advertising matter posted on legitimate locations by another union billposter. It seems that the law, or part of a law, that has always been embodied in the laws of the Alliance had become covered with dust, so now the alliance is to issue a letter to each steward of each advertising car or brigade with each circus, notifying them that they are liable to suspension if they violate the law of the International Billposters' Alliance at any time."

All of the above made fine reading in the *Billboard*, but we doubt that anyone at the meeting had any real hopes that a truce had been made ending circus billing wars. The few examples given above show that nothing came of the agreement.

The International Alliance of Billposters & Biller of the United States and Canada took an advertisement in the April 3, 1937 *Billboard*, and announced that Ringling-Barnum, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Barnes, Cole Tom Mix, Wallace Bros., Downie Bros., and Russell Bros. had signed contracts for the season. Not signed they said were Dan Rise, Seils-Sterling, Chase & Son, Schell Bros. Lee Bros., Polack Bros. and Seal Bros.

The truck shows of the 1930s carried substantial crews on their cars.

The Seils-Sterling show in 1937 had eight men on their No. 2 car, which was 12 days ahead of the show. The No. 3 car had five men, who were 8 days ahead. In



Oscar Decker was manager of this car for the Eddy Bros. Circus in 1936. Oscar Decker Collection.

addition a brigade on the opposition car consisted of 4 men.

The Tom Mix show in 1937 had F.J. Frink as car manager with five billposters and four lithographers. There were six men on the Mix opposition brigade that year. In addition to the bill car their were 5 panel trucks.

Walter L. Main Circus in 1937 had 14 men on its advance car. Seal Bros. car under manager Bill Wilcox had 10 men with an additional five on the brigade. Francis Kitzman the manager of the Russell Bros. car had 14 men working from the bill car and four panel trucks.

The Downie Bros. Circus advance car in 1936 was under the direction of Irish Horan, later well known as being associated with auto thrill shows. Horan had 12 men and four panel trucks in addition to the bill car.

In 1944 the Clyde Beatty and Russell Bros. Circus advance car was managed by Francis Kitzman and carried seven lithographers and three bill posters.

In 1946 the Clyde Beatty Railroad Circus used a truck as the advance car which was managed by John Brassill, who was later to be car manager for Ringling-Barnum, there were eight lithographers and six billposters on this car.

For the 1947 season Floyd King hired Steve Kuzmicz as car manager. The King Bros. car that year carried one programmer, one paste maker and nine lithographers and billposters. Additional men were on the brigade.

The Dales Bros. Circus in 1948 carried three lithographers and four billposters on their car.

By 1951 the Beatty car under manager G.E. Booth carried only eight men.

During the 1950s one of the biggest users of outdoor advertising was the Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Circus. This was the only big truck circus that did not use phone promotions and thus relied on heavy showings of paper. In 1950 Ed Riley was K-M car manager and carried 25 men with five panel trucks in addition to the car.

Elmer Kauffman joined the Cristiani Bros. Circus as car manager for it's first season of 1956. Kauffman used around six lithographers and bill poster Walter Clark during the years he continued to have the Cristiani car.

Steve Kuzmiec had the car on the Beatty Cole circus for a number of years before retiring a few years ago. During his rein the car carried around ten men and used two and three panel trucks along with the car.

Art "Doc" Miller gives additional insight into the opposition tactics of the truck shows. He commented:

"I think the least understood part of billing was the Watergate type of dirty ethics. You either got locations or were kicked off the advance. For a period of time I had the opposition brigade for King Bros. and much of the time I was "it", no co-workers. One time in Louisiana Elmer Kauffman sent me a wire to proceed to a certain town and "take the opposition paper", as an after thought, he added, better watch out, as they have two men there protecting their paper. I reached the town about 8 a.m. and noting a big downtown daub went in and told the owner that our circus was playing under the sponsorship of the fire department and if his roof caught on fire I felt sure he would call the fire department. He agreed so I asked permission to just have half of his wall. He agreed, so out I went and jauntily picked up my bucket, enough paper to cover all of their dates and title, but to generously leave all their pictorials. Then out of the corner of my eye I noted two guys watching me from across the street with a camera. Just as casually, I tossed my paper and bucket back in the truck and did a series of zig zag turns to lose these men. But no matter where I went they kept right on my tail. In disgust, I

These stickers were used to hold lithographs in windows. They are about 2 x 3" in size. Some of them carry the Argus Ticket Co. name indicating that they were provided by that firm. The stickers were provided in perforated roll form, and each could be torn off as used.



Elmer Kauffman, one of the last of the circus advance car managers is shown third from right with the Cristiani crew in 1958.

returned to the hotel, made a big entrance to a bar next door and came out with what looked like a sack of beer. Then I went up to my room and slept, having set the alarm for midnight. Just as I had hoped, the opposition figured I had gone on a little drinking bout, so evidently took the rest of the day and evening off for their personal pleasures.

Arising at midnight, I went from daub to daub and before daylight had covered every hit in town, then vamoosed quick-like."

"Another time in High Point, North Carolina, the local snipe held us up at 30 cents a sheet for locations with me doing the work. Later that week we missed a shipment of paper and I was detailed to jump back a few hundred miles to pick it up. Going back through High Point I was madder than a wet hen to note that every sheet of our paper had been covered by Penn Premier carnial paper. I wired the show the facts and when they came in, the

sniper walked up to Arnold Maley with his bill, which was about \$200. Arnold, with a chuckle to himself said, "Oh yes, now we are not sure our men are actually putting up all this paper so I want you to take me around the route and let me count the sheets put up. Fouled but good, the sniper stood there dazed, let the bill flutter to the ground, turned and walked away.

Another time at Binghamton, N.Y., the sniper was in the habit of putting more than one layer of live paper on a board. We were billing the King-Cristiani show and he agreed to put our paper up on a number of other boards as soon as they became "dead", three days hence. Kauffman gave him an order on the wagon for about \$90 worth of space and we departed. On show morning, Floyd King, always one to gaze in admiration at his well lit highways, nearly fell off his car seat when he noted the sniper, in great haste, slapping up our paper."

Miller continues: "It was always a pain in the neck making out the daily report, with the number of sheets, the store's name and address. Just as soon as the shows quit

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having a checker on the man, it was the custom to "pencil in" whatever name came to mind. This was easy for the bill posters, but the lithographers had about 50 locations and a tired lithographer would sit up until midnight with a phone book trying to pick out authentic sounding names for his sheet."

Each show had a standing order for date sheets, with the town name. No self-respecting billposter would bring unused dates back to the car. So these unused dates had to be disposed of. This disposal was called "Charleying."

Miller tells about this: "Charleying paper could be a nightmare. Getting sent out on a country route that was all scenery and big villages would often prove to be nothing but a gas station and a feed mill. So what's to do with a lithographers or billposters hods of dates. When it was time to go on to the next town and still a slew of paper left so it has to be Charlied. I was following Pee Wee Deckman one time and as we passed a creek, heaved out a tied up bundle of dates. Unfortunately it got caught on a tree limb and there it hung in plain view, those cursed yellow King dates stood out like the northern lights. I stopped and taking out my brush handle climbed out on that limb and by reaching to my upmost was gently nudging the bundle off the branches, when snap went the tree and into the drink went I. I had no more climbed out than along came Kauffman. Naturally, suspicious as he always was, he wanted to know what I was doing. He swallowed my quick glib reply that I had jumped out of the truck to relieve nature when a great big rattle snake chased me right into the creek.

One biller I knew used to wrap up his Charlie and mail it to some fictitious person in a hick town far off the route. He always added a cheery Happy Birthday to the wrapper.

But far too often Charlie lived on, to the consternation of the guilty party. Toss them down a cellar grating and sure enough some kid will find them and bring them to the show lot."

Miller tells of a billposter whose "charlying" cost Walter L. "Pumpkin" Main a pretty penny. It seems the biller threw a hod of paper down a town well and the lead in the ink poisoned the water which nearly killed quite a number of the natives. The paper was retrieved and presented at the office of the Main circus on show day.

During his career "Doc" Miller has come across many daubs that have lived many years. In the 1950s in Warren Centre, Pennsylvania, he saw a four sheet pictorial for the Forepaugh-Sells show. The same season he noted a large wagon shed's inside walls decorated with a hundred or more sheets for the Robinson Famous Shows. The Robinson paper was double dated for Corning and Hornell, New York.

In 1955 he found a beautiful daub of the 1938 Robbins Bros. Circus, featuring Hoot Gibson in a covered feed mill loading platform in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. Miller says peeling off layers of paper is fun, if time permitted. He recalls the excitement of



Art "Doc" Miller posted this 13 sheet high daub for the Cristiani show its first year of 1956. Art "Doc" Miller Collection.



The last of the real circus bill posters, Art "Doc" Miller is pictured here while working for the Deggeller carnival in 1974. Wendell Cultice Photo.

finding a small tack card for the Batcheller and Doris show (cira 1879-82) under many years of tacking and posting. While on the 1949 Lee Bros. show he found a daub of May Wirth with the Walter L. Main title, from a season in the early 1920s. But he says nothing beats the joy of unpeeling 20 or 30 years of layers and then finding a person's own daub underneath as the original break-in hit.

In 1939 the Cole Bros. Circus ran into

opposition from the Parker & Watts Circus in Northern, Michigan. Iron Mountain was booked by the Parker & Watts show on June 28 with Cole coming in on July 16. This resulted in some billing action as well as the issuing of a rat sheet by the Cole show.

The Clyde Beatty & Russell Bros. Circus and Dailey Bros. Circus were booked into Ft. Smith, Arkansas, within a week of each other in 1944. This brought forth wait paper and big newspaper ads on the part of the Dailey show.

In 1945 The Russell Bros. Pan-Pacific Circus ran into opposition with Cronin Bros. truck show. Cronin was playing the traditional Washington & Hill lot and Russell was at the Pan-Pacific auditorium in Hollywood. Jack Tavlin and Red Sonnenberg were associated with the Concello Russell show and were concerned about the amount of Cronin paper. They had a local printer make up sheets that read, "The location of the circus has been changed to the Pan-Pacific Auditorium." They then pasted these over the Washington Hill location on all of the Cronin paper they could find.

During the 1959 season Cristiani Bros. Circus crossed with the Beatty-Cole Circus in Sterling, Illinois, causing Beatty agent Floyd King to post lots of "Wait for the Big Show" paper. That same season, Cristiani was booked into Appleton, Wisconsin, hometown of Bill Griffith owner of the Adams Bros. & Seils Bros. Circus, day and dating the Griffith show. The Little Adams-Seils show reacted with large newspaper ads, since their bill crew was no match for the Cristiani car headed by veteran Elmer Kauffman.

But these more recent scummages can't hold a candle to the real billing wars of years past. The author can remember the amount of circus paper posted in Columbus, Ohio, in the spring of 1938, when the following shows were scheduled in a little over a month,

Col. Tim McCoy's Wild West on April 25, Hagenbeck-Wallace on May 3, Tom Mix on May 15, Cole Bros. on May 18 and Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey on June 9. The first paper to make a showing was Hagenbeck-Wallace daubs posted by the local snipe plant headed by Dick Cavanaugh. As a 13 year old I met Mr. Cavanaugh and he advised me as to the dates that the various advance cars would be in town. I visited each car and was given samples of paper. This was the start of my collection.

Today we find that most circuses use a small amount of posters and in some cases use only window cards.

The Carson & Barnes Circus in 1973 used three men on the advance. Paul Smith was manager with Bob Hutchinson and Ken Whittaker. Two VW panel trucks were used. The daily paper order called for 100 9 x 42" date tails to be used on pictorials, 50 14 x 42" panel date sheets, 50 half sheet upright date sheets, 50 half sheet flat dates, and 50 one sheet dates. The dates came from Central Show Print, in Mason City, Iowa.

About ten different styles of pictorials are used in half and one sheets flats and

uprights. The pictorial paper came from Enquirer Printing Co., of Cincinnati, Ohio.

In addition to the above the sponsor was supplied with 150 window cards, fifty each of 11 x 14", 14 x 22" and 22 x 28", all of which were pictorial.

Real lithographers are a thing of the past. All pictorial paper today is printed by letterpress, or offset. In recent years circuses purchased posters from Neil Walters, Eurika, Arkansas; Auslet, Cross & Banta, Chicago, Illinois; Globe Poster, of Chicago; Majestic Poster, of Los Angeles, California, Acme Printing Co., of Hugo, Oklahoma and Triangle Poster, of Pittsburgh.

Today Harry Anderson's Enquirer Printing Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, furnished 99 and 99/100% of all circus posters used.

The Enquirer firm was founded by his grandfather in 1888. In those beginning days the company designed and lithographed many wonderful bills for the Buffalo Bill Wild West show. Some of the original art and original bills of the Enquirer Buffalo Bill paper is now at the Circus World Museum.

Today the Enquirer firm has around 100 stock designs that are imprinted with the titles of circuses on tour in 1975. With paper costs shooting up the cost of a two sheet is 75 cents, a one sheet is 25 cents and a 1/2 sheet is 15 to 20 cents each. They also have 4, 6 and 9 sheets available. Window cards are a very big item with the shows of today and many shows use a large number



The inside of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus advance advertising car is shown here during the 1937 tour. Circus World Museum Collection.

of these as they can be tacked on poles and taped to the windows of buildings.

It all began with Strobridge in Cincinnati and today Cincinnati is still the center of circus poster printing.

The author wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the following who provided research material for this article: Arthur "Doc" Miller, Frederick A. "Babe" Boudinot, P.M. McClintock, Dave Price, Tom Parkinson and the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin.

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

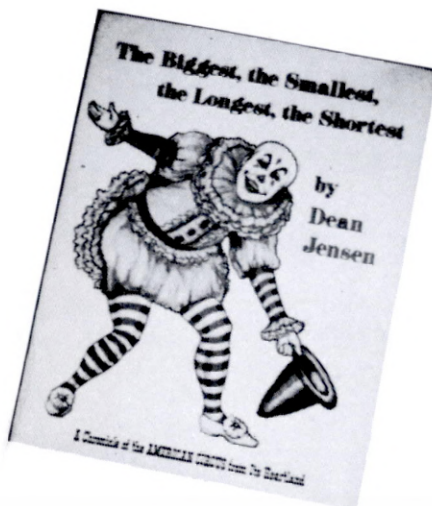
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INTERESTING HIGHLY CARVED TABLEAU WAGONS

During the golden age of the circus all shows, large and small, presented a parade around noon each day. Featured in the parade were cages from the menagerie, many of which were quite fancy in design with carvings and statues on the sides and

corners. Each show usually carried a large bandwagon, often an oversized wagon that was highly decorated with carvings. In some cases on the larger shows parade wagons would be carried that had no other use than its parade job. A steam calliope was one of these, but there were others that were just floats, sometimes depicting an event in history.

To fill out the parade many horse mounted riders were interspersed between wagons.

In addition to the types of wagons listed above each show carried baggage wagons that were decorated on the sides with large numbers of fancy carvings, and in some

cases mirrors. Performers rode atop these wagons as well as additional bands. The side show band was always part of the parade along with a clown band.

These carved baggage wagons were called tableaux or tab wagons. Many of the more famous tableau wagons appeared on different shows during their lives, moving on following the end of a title.

We have selected a few of the more colorful tableau wagons for illustration here. This is not a history of these wagons, but only a display of their design. The wagons are identified by the show and year in which the photo was taken. All photos are from the Pfening Collection.



Buffalo Bill Wild West Show late 1890s.



Rice Bros. Circus in 1913.



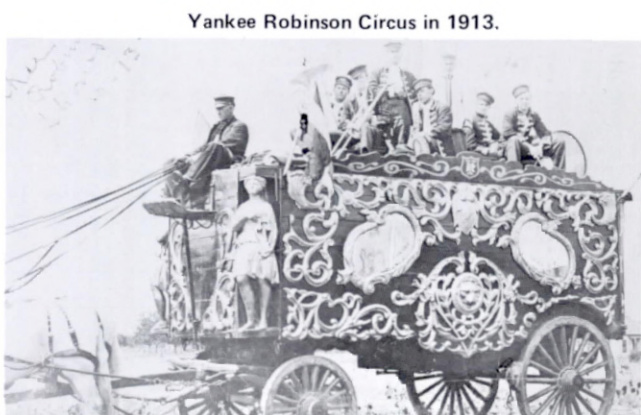
Cleopatra's Barge on Forepaugh-Sells in 1896.



Al G. Barnes Circus late 1910s. (Dunn Collection.)



Gollmar Bros. Circus in 1910.



Yankee Robinson Circus in 1913.

ONE SHEET

By Stuart Thayer

There is a quotation, probably apochryphal, but credited sometimes to the late Vince Lombardi, that coming in second is like kissing your sister. Certainly, the second place teams in athletic competition are no better remembered than sisterly busses. In fact, for years the Philadelphia Athletics baseball team were well-known for their cellar finishes while it is very difficult to remember the second-place teams of those same years.

Most of us are aware that John Bill Ricketts was the impresario of the first multi-act circus performance in America. But tell me, quickly, who was the man who gave us our second circus troupe?

His name was Thomas Swann. And he was apparently not impressed by the circus business for he managed but one stand and that a matter of thirty days.

In August, 1793 John Bill Ricketts constructed his second arena and the first of three he was to build in New York. It was on Greenwich Street behind the Macomb Houses, which were on Broadway. Today, this site is a traffic island separating Greenwich and Trinity Streets at the exit of the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel. Ricketts used this building for one season, August to November, 1793 and then went on to Charleston.

In the fall of 1794 Swann announced that he would present an equestrian exhibition in the circus "near the Battery." Since we know of no other arena we assume he leased Ricketts' building.

He opened on September 10 what George Odell characterizes as less a circus than a riding school. According to the **Daily Advertiser** Swann was to give a lecture on real horsemanship and would show how one should mount, dismount, adjust the bridle rein, etc. A lady was to give a demonstration indicating how safe riding was (urban women were not commonly riders, as were their country counterparts). There was to be a minuet on horseback, accompanied by a band of music, and Swann would give a demonstration of broadsword exercises.

The lady mentioned was probably the Miss Johnson, who took a benefit in the same hall on October 10. She was the first woman circus performer in America, and possibly the first American ever to appear in the ring. We have no idea who she was. Her name is the same as that in an advertisement in the **New York Commercial Advertiser** of February 15, 1800 in which an unidentified party seeks the whereabouts of several circus performers. One of them he calls Mrs. Johnson or the Little Swede, rider. If it is the same one of the ads is in error in citing her marital state and one of them in the country of her origin. (This ad, incidentally, would appear to be the first Acts Wanted ad in circus history). In the notice of her benefit she is referred to as a native of New York.

Fireworks were promised on the occasion of Miss Johnson's night as well as "the leaping bar," which we take to be a hurdle act. October 20 saw the addition of the first trained animals in a circus, excepting horses, of course. M. Cressin presented a troupe of dancing monkeys led by General Jacco, the tight-rope dancer. Also, Gibonne would imitate a footman and a waiter, pick cards from the deck, print the initials of anyone caring to give his out (this cannot be!) on a tiny printing press.

The season ended November 10, 1794 and the building was never used again for circus purposes, Ricketts building another for his second New York appearance.

Swann then moved, or possibly returned, to Philadelphia. He set up shop as a veterinarian and dealer in horses. In 1899 he advertised in the **Lancaster Journal** of August 31 that he had established a riding school in that town and would teach sword exercises as well.

In a time when the horse was the only means of land locomotion it may seem strange that riding needed to be taught, but its need is evident from all the advertising offering it. Most circus riders gave riding lessons at one time or another. Using the arena in the morning was a popular way of increasing income.

There were people who didn't own horses or who came from families too poor to afford them who, upon reaching the affluence necessary to do so, brought riding animals. To appear in public

without knowing how to manage your steed was a sure sign of a *nouveau*. Also, ladies took up the habit, whatever their station, and needed lessons.

As in any endeavor, there were refinements to be learned—witness the golf professional. In a time of militia service anyone interested in joining a cavalry unit had to be somewhat accomplished both as rider and swordsman, hence the broadsword instruction.

By 1803 Swann had established a riding school in Centre Square, Philadelphia, where city hall stands today. Apparently, he moved it in 1805 to the Centre House Tavern on Market Street, not far away. Centre Square, in Federal times, was a popular place for racing horses, a track being available between two rows of trees that surrounded the square. We have seen references in contemporary material in which residents complained that they couldn't have a peaceful walk about the square after dinner because the young bloods were racing their horses.

In March, 1807 the notices referred to Swann's Amphitheatre, Centre Square. He could as well have called it circus, except that amphitheatre implies a roofed building, while circus does—or did—not. At that time the word circus meant the round building containing the performance, not the troupe itself.

Poulson's American Daily Advertiser for May 14, 1807 has an ad in which Swann offers a performance of his spotted horse of knowledge from Africa, one "Spottee." The same horse had appeared in Boston and in New York prior to the Philadelphia exhibition, but Swann was not mentioned as having a connection with it in those places. He may have bought the animal from someone else, or only bothered to use his own name in ads in his own city.

Spottee was multi-colored, having four distinct hues to his skin. His tail was supposedly like that of an elephant. Cuts in the ads make him appear to be spotted like an appaloosa. Other than being curiously marked he was also trained. He was said to add, subtract, multiply and divide, read a watch, count the buttons on your coat as well as count the house.

Swann took this marvel to Baltimore in September 1807 where he showed it until October 5 at Cook's Tavern in Market Square. With this stand both Swann and Spottee drop from sight. It may well be that they went to Europe.

Swann surfaced again in time to help train some cavalry units raised during the period of confrontation prior to the War of 1812. He died in Philadelphia on July 26, 1812. Being our second circus impresario should be enough for us to take him to our memory, but he had the further distinction of introducing women into the circus and hiring the first troupe of trained animals other than horses. It all appears accidental, since his interest was obviously that of a riding teacher, but there are in history more accidental heroes than there are intended ones.

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JULIAN JIMINEZ RETIRING

On January 1, 1972 Julian Jimenez, of Atchison, Kansas, assumed the office of Secretary-Treasurer of the Circus Historical Society.

Since that time Mr. Jimenez has served the organization faithfully. The job is not an easy one, and is the most demanding in time of any CHS office.

This contribution to the CHS by Julian Jimenez is sincerely appreciated by the officers and members.

Following these four years of service Mr. Jimenez is now retiring from the office.

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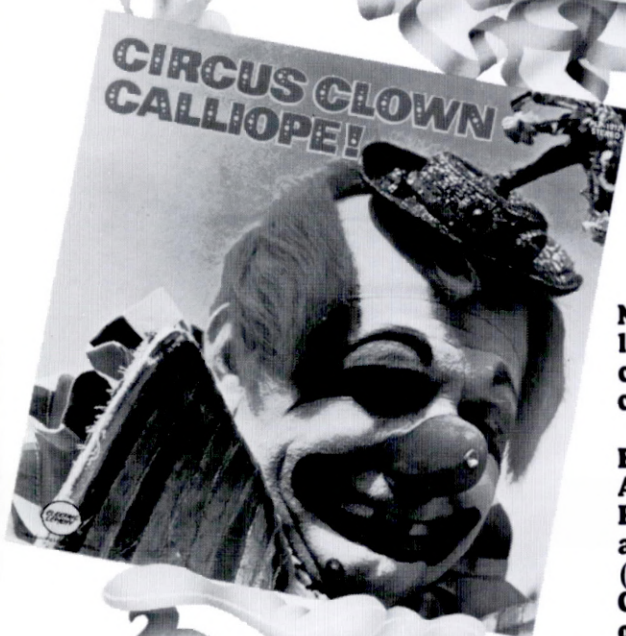
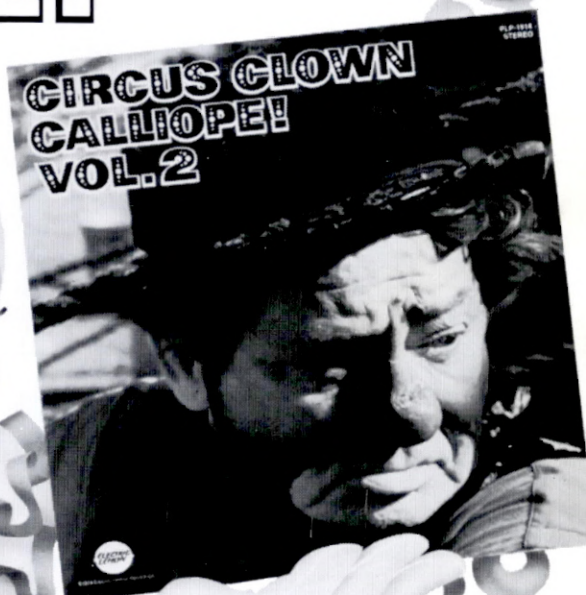
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